

THE  
ART OF POETRY:  
AN  
EPISTLE.

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[PRICE, THREE HALF-CROWNS.]

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Q. HORATII FLACCI Epistola ad PISONES,

DE ARTE POETICA.

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THE  
ART OF POETRY:

AN  
EPISTLE

TO THE  
P I S O S.

TRANSLATED FROM HORACE.

*L. Horatius*

WITH NOTES.

BY GEORGE COLMAN.

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L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.

M.DCC.LXXXIII.

Q HORATII FLACCI Epistolas ad Pisones.

DE ARTE POETICA.

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ART OF POETRY:

AN

EPIC LIST

TO THE

PIS

TRANSLATED FROM HORACE

WITH NOTES

BY GEORGE COLMAN.



PRINTED FOR T. C. OLLIVER, THE STRAND.

**T O**

**The Rev. JOSEPH WARTON, D. D.**

**MASTER of WINCHESTER SCHOOL;**

**AND TO**

**The Rev. THOMAS WARTON, B. D.**

**FELLOW of TRINITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.**

**MY DEAR FRIENDS!**

**I**N a conversation, some months ago, I happened to mention to you the idea I had long entertained of that celebrated Epistle of Horace, commonly distinguished by the title of **THE ART OF POETRY**. I will not say that you acceded to my opinion; but I flattered myself that I at least interested your curiosity, and engaged your attention: our discourse, however, revived an intention I had once formed, of communicating my thoughts on the subject to the Publick; an intention I had only dropt for want of leisure and inclination to attempt a translation of the Epistle, which I thought necessary to accompany the original, and my remarks on it. In the original, Horace assumes the air and stile of an affectionate teacher, admonishing and instructing his young friends and pupils: but the following translation, together with the observations annexed, I address to You as my Masters, from whom I look for sound information, a well-grounded con-



firmation of my hypothesis, or a solution of my doubts, and a correction of my errors.

It is almost needless to observe, that the Epistle in question has very particularly exercised the critical sagacity of the literary world; yet it is remarkable that, amidst the great variety of comments and decisions on the work, it has been almost universally considered, except by one acute and learned writer of this country, as a loose, vague, and desultory composition; a mass of shining materials; like pearls unstrung, valuable indeed, but not displayed to advantage.

Some have contended, with Scaliger at their head, that this pretended *Art of Poetry* is totally void of art; and that the very work, in which the beauty and excellence of *Order* (ORDINIS VIRTUS ET VENUS!) is strongly recommended, is in itself unconnected, confused, and immethodical. The advocates for the writer have in great measure confessed the charge, but pleaded, in excuse and vindication, the familiarity of an Epistle, and even the genius of Poetry, in which the formal divisions of a prosaick treatise on the art would have been insupportable. They have also denied that Horace ever intended such a treatise, or that he ever gave to this Epistle the title of *the Art of Poetry*; on which title the attacks of Scaliger, and his followers, are chiefly grounded. The title, however, is confessedly as old as the age of Quintilian; and that the work itself has a perpetual reference to *Poets and Poetry*, is as evident, as that it is, from beginning to end, in its manner, stile, address, and form, perfectly *Epistolary*.

The learned and ingenious Critick distinguished above, an early ornament to letters, and now a worthy dignitary of the church, leaving vain comments, and idle disputes on the *title* of the work, sagaciously directed his researches to scrutinize the work itself; properly endeavouring to trace and investigate from the composition the end and design of the writer, and remembering the axiom of the Poet, to whom his friend had been appointed the commentator.

*In every work regard THE AUTHOR'S END!*

*For none can compass more than they intend.* Pope.

With this view of illustrating and explaining Horace's *Art of Poetry*, this shrewd and able writer, about thirty years ago, republished the original Epistle, giving the text chiefly after Dr. Bentley, subjoining an English Commentary and

and Notes, and prefixing an Introduction, from which I beg leave to transcribe most part of the three first paragraphs.

“ It is agreed on all hands, that the antients are our masters in the *art* of composition. Such of their writings, therefore, as deliver instructions for the exercise of this *art*, must be of the highest value. And, if any of them hath acquired a credit, in this respect, superior to the rest, it is, perhaps, the *following work*: which the learned have long since considered as a kind of *summary* of the rules of good writing; to be gotten by heart by every young student; and to whose decisive authority the greatest masters in taste and composition must finally submit.

“ But the more unquestioned the credit of this poem is, the more it will concern the publick, that it be justly and accurately understood. The writer of these sheets then believed it might be of use, if he took some pains to clear the sense, connect the method, and ascertain the scope and purpose, of this admired epistle. Others, he knew indeed, and some of the first fame for critical learning, had been before him in this attempt. Yet he did not find himself prevented by their labours; in which, besides innumerable lesser faults, he, more especially, observed two inveterate errors, of such a sort, as must needs perplex the genius, and distress the learning, of *any* commentator. The *one* of these respects the *SUBJECT*; the other, the *METHOD* of the *Art of Poetry*. It will be necessary to say something upon each.

“ 1. That the *Art of Poetry*, at large, is not the *proper* subject of this piece, is so apparent, that it hath not escaped the dullest and least attentive of its Criticks. For, however all the different *kinds* of poetry might appear to enter into it, yet every one saw, that *some* at least were very slightly considered: whence the frequent attempts, the *artes et institutiones poeticæ*, of writers both at home and abroad, to supply its deficiencies. But, though this truth was seen and confessed, it unluckily happened, that the sagacity of his numerous commentators went no further. They still considered this famous Epistle as a *collection*, though not a *system*, of criticisms on poetry in general; with this concession however, that the stage had evidently the largest share in it \*. Under the influence of this prejudice, several writers of name took upon them to comment and explain it: and with the success, which was to be expected from so fatal a mistake on setting out, as the not seeing, “ that the proper and sole purpose of the Author, was, not to abridge the Greek Criticks, whom he probably never thought of; nor to amuse himself with composing a short critical system, for the general use of poets, which every line of it absolutely confutes; but, simply to criticize the ROMAN DRAMA.” For to this end, not the tenor of the work only, but as will appear, every single precept in it, ultimately refers. The mischiefs of this original error have been long felt. It hath occasioned a constant perplexity in defining the *general* method, and in fixing the import of *particular* rules. Nay its effects have reached still further. For conceiving, as they did, that the whole had been composed out of the Greek Criticks, the

\* Satyra hæc est in sui sæculi poetas, PRÆCIPUE vero in Romanum Drama. Baxter.



“ labour and ingenuity of its interpreters have been misemployed in picking out authorities,  
 “ which were not wanted, and in producing, or, more properly, by their studied refinements  
 “ in *creating*, conformities, which were never designed. Whence it hath come to pass,  
 “ that, instead of investigating the order of the Poet’s own reflexions, and scrutinizing the  
 “ peculiar state of the Roman Stage (the methods, which common sense and common  
 “ criticism would prescribe) the world hath been nauseated with insipid lectures on *Aristotle*,  
 “ and *Phalereus*; whose solid sense hath been so attenuated and subtilized by the delicate  
 “ operation of French criticism, as hath even gone some way towards bringing the *art* itself  
 “ into disrepute.

“ 2. But the wrong explications of this poem have arisen, not from the misconception of  
 “ the *subject* only, but from an inattention to the *METHOD* of it. The *latter* was, in part,  
 “ the genuine consequence of the *former*. For, not suspecting an unity of design in the  
 “ subject, its interpreters never looked for, or could never find, a consistency of disposition,  
 “ in the method. And this was indeed the very block upon which HEINSIUS, and, before  
 “ him, JULIUS SEALIGER, himself stumbled. These illustrious Criticks, with all the force  
 “ of genius, which is required to disembarraß an involved subject, and all the aids of learning,  
 “ that can lend a ray to enlighten a dark one, have, notwithstanding, found themselves  
 “ utterly unable to unfold the order of this Epistle; infomuch, that SCALIGER \* hath boldly  
 “ pronounced the conduct of it to be *vicious*; and HEINSIUS had no other way to evade the  
 “ charge, than by recurring to the forced and uncritical expedient of a licentious transpo-  
 “ sition. The truth is, they were both in one common error, that the Poet’s purpose had  
 “ been to write a criticism of the Art of Poetry at large, and not, as is here shewn, of the  
 “ Roman Drama in particular.”

The remainder of this Introduction, as well as the Commentary and Notes, afford ample proofs of the erudition and ingenuity of the Critick: yet I much doubt, whether he has been able to convince the learned world of the truth of his main proposition, “ than it was the proper and sole purpose of the Author, simply to *criticise the ROMAN DRAMA*.” His Commentary is, it must be owned, extremely seducing; yet the attentive reader of Horace will perhaps often fancy, that he perceives a violence and constraint offered to the composition, in order to accommodate it to the system of the Commentator: who, to such a reader, may perhaps seem to mark transitions, and point out connections, as well as to maintain a *method* in the Commentary, which cannot clearly be deduced from the text, to which it refers.

This very ingenious *Commentary* opens as follows:

“ The subject of this piece being, as I suppose, *one*, viz. *the state of the Roman Drama*,  
 “ and common sense requiring, even in the freest forms of composition, some kind of *method*,

\* Pref. in *LIT. PORT.* et l. vi. p. 338.



“ the intelligent reader will not be surprized to find the poet prosecuting his subject in a  
 “ regular, well-ordered *plan*; which, for the more exact description of it, I distinguish into  
 “ three parts :

“ I. The first of them [from l. 1 to 89] is preparatory to the main subject of the Epistle,  
 “ containing some general rules and reflexions on poetry, but principally with an eye to the  
 “ following parts : by which means it serves as an useful introduction to the poet’s design,  
 “ and opens with that air of ease and elegance, essential to the epistolary form.

“ II. The main body of the Epistle [from l. 89 to 295] is laid out in regulating the *Roman*  
 “ Stage; but chiefly in giving rules for Tragedy; not only as that was the sublimer species  
 “ of the *Drama*, but, as it should seem, less cultivated and understood.

“ III. The last part [from l. 295 to the end] exhorts to correctness in writing; yet still  
 “ with an eye, principally, to the *dramatic species*: and is taken up partly in removing the  
 “ causes, that prevented it; and partly in directing to the use of such means, as might serve  
 “ to promote it. Such is the general plan of the Epistle.”

In this general summary, with which the Critick introduces his particular Commentary, a very material circumstance is acknowledged, which perhaps tends to render the system on which it proceeds extremely doubtful, if not wholly untenable. The original Epistle consists of four hundred and seventy-six lines; and it appears, from the above numerical analysis, that not half of those lines, only two hundred and six verses, [from v. 89 to 295] are employed on the subject of the *Roman Stage*. The first of the three parts above delineated [from v. 1 to 89] certainly contains general rules and reflexions on poetry, but surely with no particular reference to the Drama. As to the second part, the Critick, I think, might fairly have extended the Poet’s consideration of the Drama to the 365th line, seventy lines further than he has carried it: but the last hundred and eleven lines of the Epistle so little allude to the Drama, that the only passage in which a mention of the Stage has been supposed to be implied, [*ludusque repertus, &c.*] is, by the learned and ingenious Critick himself, particularly distinguished with a very different interpretation. Nor can this portion of the Epistle be considered, by the impartial and intelligent reader, as a mere exhortation “ to correctness in writing; taken up partly in removing the causes that prevented it; and partly in directing to the use of such means, as might serve to promote it.” *Correctness* is indeed here, as in many other parts of Horace’s Satires and Epistles, occasionally inculcated; but surely the main scope of this animated conclusion is to deter those, who are not blest with genius, from attempting the walks of Poetry.

I much

I much approve what this writer has urged on the *unity of subject, and beauty of epistolary method* observed in this Work ; but cannot agree that “ the main subject and intention was *the regulation of the Roman Stage.*” How far I may differ concerning particular passages, will appear from the notes at the end of this translation. In controversial criticism difference of opinion cannot but be expressed, (*veniam petimusque damusque vicissim,*) but I hope I shall not be thought to have delivered my sentiments with petulance, or be accused of want of respect for a character, that I most sincerely reverence and admire.

I now proceed to set down in writing, the substance of what I suggested to you in conversation, concerning my own conceptions of the end and design of Horace in this Epistle. In this explanation I shall call upon Horace as my chief witness, and the Epistle itself, as my principal voucher. Should their testimonies prove adverse, my system must be abandoned, like many that have preceded it, as vain and chimerical : and if it should even, by their support, be acknowledged and received, it will, I think, like the egg of Columbus, appear so plain, easy, and obvious, that it will seem almost wonderful, that the Epistle has never been considered in the same light, till now. I do not wish to dazzle with the lustre of a new hypothesis, which requires, I think, neither the strong opticks, nor powerful glasses, of a critical Herschel, to ascertain the truth of it ; but is a system, that lies level to common apprehension, and a luminary, discoverable by the naked eye.

My notion is simply this. I conceive that one of the sons of Piso, undoubtedly the elder, had either written, or meditated, a poetical work, most probably a Tragedy ; and that he had, with the knowledge of the family, communicated his piece, or intention, to Horace : but Horace, either disapproving of the work, or doubting of the poetical faculties of the Elder Piso, or both, wished to dissuade him from all thoughts of publication. With this view he formed the design of writing this Epistle, addressing it, with a courtliness and delicacy perfectly agreeable to his acknowledged character, indifferently to the whole family, the father and his two sons. *Epistola ad Pisones, de Arte Poetica.*

He begins with general reflections, generally addressed to his *three* friends. *Credite, PISONES !—PATER, & JUVENES patre digni !—*In these preliminary rules,



rules, equally necessary to be observed by Poets of every denomination, he dwells on the necessity of unity of design, the danger of being dazzled by the splendor of partial beauties, the choice of subjects, the beauty of order, the elegance and propriety of diction, and the use of a thorough knowledge of the nature of the several different species of Poetry: summing up this introductory portion of his Epistle, in a manner perfectly agreeable to the conclusion of it.

Descriptas servare vices, operumque colores,  
Cur ego si nequeo ignoroque, poeta salutor?  
Cur nescire, pudens pravè, quam discere malo?

From this general view of poetry, on the canvas of Aristotle, but entirely after his own manner, the writer proceeds to give the rules and history of the Drama; adverting principally to Tragedy, with all its constituents and appendages of diction, fable, character, incidents, chorus, measure, musick, and decoration. In this part of the work, according to the interpretation of the best criticks, and indeed (I think) according to the manifest tenor of the Epistle, he addresses himself entirely to *the two young gentlemen*, pointing out to them the difficulty, as well as excellence, of the Dramatick Art; insisting on the avowed superiority of the Græcian Writers, and ascribing the comparative failure of the Romans to negligence and avarice. The Poet, having exhausted this part of his subject, suddenly drops a *second*, or dismisses at once no less than *two* of the *three* Persons, to whom he originally addressed his Epistle, and turning short on the ELDER PRISO, most earnestly conjures him to ponder on the danger of precipitate publication, and the ridicule to which the author of wretched poetry exposes himself. From the commencement of this partial address, O MAJOR JUVENUM, &c. [v. 366] to the end of the Poem, *almost a fourth part of the whole*, the second person plural, *Pifones!—Vos!—Vos, O Pompilius Sanguis!* &c. is discarded, and the second person singular, *Tu, Te, Tibi,* &c. invariably takes its place. The arguments too are equally relative and personal; not only shewing the necessity of study, combined with natural genius, to constitute a Poet; but dwelling on the peculiar danger and delusion of flattery, to a writer of rank and fortune; as well as the inestimable value of an honest friend, to rescue him from derision and contempt. The Poet, however, in reverence to the Muse, qualifies his exaggerated description of an infatuated scribbler, with a most noble encomium of the uses of Good Poetry, vindicating the dignity of the Art, and proudly asserting,



setting, that the most exalted characters would not be disgraced by the cultivation of it.

*Ne forte pudori*

*Sit tibi Musa, lyræ solers, & cantor Apollo.*

It is worthy observation, that in the satirical picture of a frantick bard, with which Horace concludes his Epistle, he not only runs counter to what might be expected as a Corollary of an Essay on *the Art of Poetry*, but contradicts his own usual practice and sentiments. In his Epistle to Augustus, instead of stigmatizing the love of verse as an abominable phrenzy, he calls it (*levis hæc insania*) a slight madness, and descants on its good effects—*quantas VIRTUTES habeat, sic collige!*

In another Epistle, speaking of himself, and his addiction to poetry, he says,

————— *ubi quid datur otii,*  
*Illudo chartis; hoc est, MEDIOCRIBUS ILLIS*  
*Ex vitiiis unum, &c.*

All which, and several other passages in his works, almost demonstrate that it was not, without a particular purpose in view, that he dwelt so forcibly on the description of a man resolved

————— *in spite*  
*Of nature and his stars to write.*

To conclude, if I have not contemplated my system, till I am become blind to its imperfections, this view of the Epistle not only preserves to it all that *unity of subject, and elegance of method*, so much insisted on by the excellent Critick, to whom I have so often referred; but by adding to his judicious general abstract the familiarities of personal address, so strongly marked by the writer, not a line appears idle or misplaced: while the order and disposition of the Epistle to the Pisos appears as evident and unembarrassed, as that of the Epistle to Augustus; in which last, the actual state of the Roman Drama seems to have been more manifestly the object of Horace's attention, than in the Work now under consideration.

Before I leave you to the further examination of the original of Horace, and submit to you the translation, with the notes that accompany it, I cannot help observing, that the system, which I have here laid down, is not so entirely new, as it may perhaps at first appear to the reader, or as I myself originally supposed

supposed it. No Critick indeed has, to my knowledge, directly considered the whole *Epistle* in the same light that I have now taken it; but yet particular passages seem so strongly to enforce such an interpretation, that the Editors, Translators, and Commentators, have been occasionally driven to explanations of a similar tendency; of which the notes annexed will exhibit several striking instances.

Of the following version I shall only say, that I have not, knowingly, adopted a single expression, tending to warp the judgement of the learned or unlearned reader, in favour of my own hypothesis. I attempted this translation, chiefly because I could find no other equally close and literal. Even the Version of Roscommon, tho' in blank verse, is in some parts a paraphrase, and in others, but an abstract. I have myself, indeed, endeavoured to support my right to that force and freedom of translation which Horace himself recommends; yet I have faithfully exhibited in our language several passages, which his professed translators have abandoned, as impossible to be given in English.

All that I think necessary to be further said on the *Epistle* will appear in the notes,

I am, my dear friends,

With the truest respect and regard,

Your most sincere admirer,

LONDON,  
March 8, 1783.

And very affectionate, humble servant,

GEORGE COLMAN.

111719

**Q. HORATII FLACCI**

**EPISTOLA**

**AD**

**PISONES**

**H**umano capiti cervicem pictor equinam  
Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas  
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum  
Definat in piscem mulier formosa superne;  
Spectatum admissi risum teneatis, amici?  
**C**redite, Pisones, isti tabulæ fore librum  
Perfimum, cujus, velut ægri somnia, vanæ

5

Fingentur



---

H O R A C E 's  
E P I S T L E  
TO THE  
P I S O S.

---

W H A T if a Painter, in his art to shine,  
A human head and horse's neck should join;  
From various creatures put the limbs together,  
Cover'd with plumes, from ev'ry bird a feather;  
And in a filthy tail the figure drop, 5  
A fish at bottom, a fair maid at top:  
Viewing a picture of this strange condition,  
Would you not laugh at such an exhibition?  
Trust me, my Pisos, wild as this may seem,  
The volume such, where, like a sick-man's dream, 10

3 EPISTOLA AD PISONES.

Fingentur species: ut nec pes, nec caput uni

Reddatur formæ. Pictoribus atque Poëtis

Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas: 10

Scimus, et hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim:

Sed non ut placidis coëant immitia, non ut

Serpentes avibus gementur, tigribus agni.

Inceptis gravibus plerumque et magna professis

Purpureus latè qui splendeat unus et alter 15

Affuitur pannus; cùm lucus et ara Dianæ,

Et properantis aquæ per amœnos ambitus agros,

Aut flumen Rhenum, aut pluvius describitur arcus.

Sed nunc non erat his locus: et fortasse cupressum

Scis simulare: quid hoc, si fractis enatat exspes 20

Extravagant conceits throughout prevail,

Gross and fantastick, neither head nor tail.

“ Poets and Painters ever were allow’d

“ Some daring flight above the vulgar croud.”

True: we indulge them in that daring flight, 15

And challenge in our turn an equal right:

But not the soft and savage to combine,

Serpents to doves, to tigers lambkins join.

Oft works of promise large, and high attempt,

Are piec’d and guarded, to escape contempt, 20

With here and there a remnant highly drest,

That glitters thro’ the gloom of all the rest.

Then Dian’s grove and altar are the theme,

Then thro’ rich meadows flows the silver stream;

The River Rhine, perhaps, adorns the lines, 25

Or the gay Rainbow in description shines.

These we allow have each their several grace;

But each and several now are out of place.

A cypress you can draw; what then? you’re hir’d,

And from your art a sea-piece is requir’d; 30

A shipwreck’d



Navibus, ære dato qui pingitur? amphora cœpit

Institui: currente rotâ cur urceus exit?

Denique sit quidvis simplex duntaxat et unum.

Maxima pars vatum, (pater, et juvenes patre digni)

Decipimur specie recti. Brevis esse laboro, 25

Obscurus fio: sectantem lævia, nervi

Deficiunt animique: professus grandia turgent:

Serpit humi tutus nimium timidusque procellæ.

Qui variare cupit rem prodigaliter unam,

Delphinum silvis appingit, fluctibus aprum. 30

In vitium ducit culpæ fuga, si caret arte.

A shipwreck'd mariner, despairing, faint,  
 (The price paid down) you are ordain'd to paint.  
 Why dwindle to a cruet from a tun?  
 Simple be all you execute, and one!

Lov'd fire! lov'd sons, well worthy such a fire! 35  
 Most bards are dupes to beauties they admire.  
 Proud to be brief, for brevity must please,  
 I grow obscure; the follower of ease  
 Wants nerve and soul; the lover of sublime  
 Swells to bombast; while he who dreads that crime, 40  
 Too fearful of the whirlwind rising round,  
 A wretched reptile, creeps along the ground:  
 The bard, ambitious fancies who displays,  
 And tortures one poor thought a thousand ways,  
 Heaps prodigies on prodigies; in woods 45  
 Pictures the dolphin, and the boar in floods:  
 Thus ev'n the fear of faults to faults betrays,  
 Unless a master-hand conduct the lays.

Æmilium circa ludum faber imus et ungues  
 Exprimet, et molles imitabitur ære capillos,  
 Infelix operis summâ, quia ponere totum  
 Nesciet : hunc ego me, si quid componere curem, 35  
 Non magis esse velim, quàm pravo vivere naso,  
 Spectandum nigris oculis, nigroque capillo.

Sumite materiam vestris, qui scribitis, æquam  
 Viribus : et versate diu, quid ferre recusent  
 Quid valeant humeri. Cui lecta potenter erit res, 40  
 Nec facundia deferet hunc, nec lucidus ordo.

Ordinis hæc virtus erit et venus, aut ego fallor,  
 Ut jam nunc dicat, jam nunc debentia dici  
 Pleraque differat, et præsens in tempus omittat.



An under workman, of th' Æmilian class,  
 Shall mould the nails, and trace the hair in brass, 50  
 Bungling at last; because his narrow soul  
 Wants room to comprehend *a perfect whole*.  
 To be this man, would I a work compose,  
 No more I'd wish, than for a horrid nose,  
 With hair as black as jet, and eyes as black as flocks.

Select, all ye who write, a subject fit, 56  
 A subject, not too mighty for your wit!  
 And ere you lay your shoulders to the wheel,  
 Weigh well their strength, and all their weakness feel!  
 He, who his subject happily can chuse, 60  
 Wins to his favour the benignant Muse;  
 The aid of eloquence he ne'er shall lack,  
 And order shall dispose and clear his track.

Order, I trust, may boast, nor boast in vain,  
 These Virtues and these Graces in her train.  
 What on the instant should be said, to say; 65  
 Things, best reserv'd at present, to delay;

Hoc amet, hoc spernat, promissi carminis auctor. 45

In verbis etiam tenuis cautusque ferendis,  
Dixeris egregiè, notum si callida verbum  
Reddiderit junctura novum : si fortè necesse est  
Indiciis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum ;  
Fingere cinctutis non exaudita Cethegis 50  
Continget : dabiturque licentia sumpta pudenter.  
Et nova factaque nuper habebunt verba fidem, si  
Græco fonte cadant, parcè detorta. Quid autem?  
Cæcilio, Plautoque dabit Romanus, ademptum  
Virgilio, Varioque? ego cur acquirere pauca 55

Si

Guiding the bard, thro' his continu'd verse,  
 What to reject, and when; and what rehearse.

On the old stock of words our fathers knew,  
 Frugal and cautious of engrafting new, 70  
 Happy your art, if by a cunning phrase  
 To a new meaning a known word you raise:  
 If 'tis your lot to tell, at some chance time,  
 " Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,"  
 Where you are driv'n perforce to many a word 75  
 Which the strait-lac'd Cethegi never heard,  
 Take, but with coyness take, the licence wanted,  
 And such a licence shall be freely granted:  
 New, or but recent, words shall have their course,  
 If drawn discreetly from the Græcian source. 80  
 Shall Rome, Cæcilius, Plautus, fix *your* claim,  
 And not to Virgil, Varius, grant the same?  
 Or if myself should some new words attain,  
 Shall I be grudg'd the little wealth I gain? 84



Si possum, invideor; cùm lingua Catonis et Ennii

Sermonem patrium ditaverit, et nova rerum

Nomina protulerit? Licuit, semperque licebit

Signatum præsente notâ procudere nomen.

Ut silvæ foliis pronos mutantur in annos; 60

Prima cadunt: ita verborum vetus interit ætas,

Et juvenum ritu florent mōdò nata vigentque.

Debemur morti nos, nostraque; sive receptus

Terrâ Neptunus, classes Aquilonibus arcet,

Regis opus; sterilisve diu palus, aptaque remis, 65

Vicinas urbes alit, et grave sentit aratrum:

Seu cursum mutavit iniquum frugibus amnis,

Doctus iter melius: mortalia facta peribunt,

Nedum

EPISTLE TO THE PISOS. 7

Tho' Cato, Ennius, in the days of yore,  
 Enrich'd our tongue with many thousands more,  
 And gave to objects names unknown before?  
 No! it ne'er was, ne'er shall be, deem'd a crime,  
 To stamp on words the coinage of the time.  
 As woods endure a constant change of leaves, 90  
 Our language too a change of words receives:  
 Year after year drop off the ancient race,  
 While young ones bud and flourish in their place.  
 Nor we, nor all we do, can death withstand;  
*Whether the Sea*, imprison'd in the land,  
 A work imperial! takes a harbour's form,  
 Where navies ride secure, and mock the storm;  
*Whether the Marsh*, within whose horrid shore  
 Barrenness dwelt, and boatmen plied the oar,  
 Now furrow'd by the plough, a laughing plain, 100  
 Feeds all the cities round with fertile grain;  
 Or if *the River*, by a prudent force,  
 The corn once flooding, learns a better course.

The

Nedum sermonum stet honos, et gratia vivax.  
 Multa renascentur, quæ jam cecidère; cadentque 70  
 Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,  
 Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus, et norma loquendi.

Res gestæ regumque ducumque et tristia bella,  
 Quo scribi possent numero, monstravit Homerus.  
 Versibus impariter junctis querimonia primùm, 75  
 Pòst etiam inclusa est voti sententia compos.  
 Quis tamen exiguos elegos emiserit auctor,  
 Grammatici certant, et adhuc sub judice lis est.

Archilochum proprio tabies armavit iambo.  
 Hunc focci cepère pedem, grandesque cothurni, 80  
 Alternis aptum sermonibus, et populares  
 Vincentem strepitus, et natum rebus agendis.



The works of mortal man shall all decay ;  
And words are grac'd and honour'd but a day : 105  
Many shall rise again, that now are dead ;  
Many shall fall, that now hold high the head :  
Custom alone their rank and date can teach,  
Custom, the sov'reign, law, and rule of speech.

For deeds of kings and chiefs, and battles fought, 110  
What numbers are most fitting, Homer taught :

Couplets unequal were at first confin'd  
To speak in broken verse the mourner's mind.  
Prosperity at length, and free content,  
In the same numbers gave their raptures vent ; 115  
But who first fram'd the Elegy's small song,  
Grammarians squabble, and will squabble long.

Archilochus, 'gainst vice, a noble rage  
Arm'd with his own Iambicks to engage :  
With these the humble Sock, and Buskin proud 120  
Shap'd dialogue; and still'd the noisy croud ;

Embrac'd

Musa dedit fidibus divos, puerosque deorum,  
Et pugilem victorem, et equum certamine primum,  
Et juvenum curas, et libera vina referre. 85

Descriptas servare vices, operumque colores,  
Cur ego, si nequeo ignoroque, poeta salutor?  
Cur nescire, pudens prave, quam discere malo?

Versibus exponi tragicis res comica non vult.  
Indignatur item privatis ac prope focco 90  
Dignis carminibus narrari cœna Thyestæ.  
Singula quæque locum teneant fortita decenter.

Interdum

EPISTLE TO THE PISOS. 9

Embrac'd the measure, prov'd its ease and force,  
And found it apt for business or discourse:

Gods, and the sons of Gods, in Odes to sing,  
The Muse attunes her Lyre, and strikes the string; 125  
Victorious Boxers, Racers, mark the line,  
The cares of youthful love, and joys of wine.

The various outline of each work to fill,  
If nature gives no power, and art no skill;  
If, marking nicer shades, I miss my aim, 130  
Why am I greeted with a Poet's name?  
Or if, thro' ignorance, I can't discern,  
Why, from false modesty, forbear to learn?

A comick incident loaths tragick strains:  
Thy feast, Thyestes, lowly verse disdains; 135  
Familiar diction scorns, as base and mean,  
Touching too nearly on the comick scene.  
Each stile allotted to its proper place,  
Let each appear with its peculiar grace!

D

Yet



Interdum tamen et vocem comœdia tollit;  
 Iratusque Chremes tumido delitigat ore;  
 Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri. 95  
 Telephus aut Peleus, cum pauper et exul uterque,  
 Projicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba,  
 Si curat cor spectantis tetigisse querelâ.

Non satis est pulchra esse poemata; dulcia sunt,  
 Et quocunque volent, animum auditoris agunt. 100  
 Ut ridentibus arrident, ita flentibus adflent  
 Humani vultus; si vis me flere, dolendum est  
 Primum ipsi tibi: tunc tua me infortunia laedent.  
 Telephe, vel Peleu, male si mandata loqueris,  
 Aut dormitabo, aut ridebo; tristia moestum 105  
 Vultum verba decent; iratum, plena minarum;

Ludentem,

Yet Comedy at times exalts her strain, 140  
 And angry Chremes storms in swelling vein:  
 The tragick hero, plung'd in deep distress,  
 Sinks with his fate, and makes his language less,  
 Peleus and Telephus, poor, banish'd! each  
 Drop their big six-foot words, and sounding speech; 145  
 Or else, what bosom in their grief takes part,  
 Which cracks the ear, but cannot touch the heart?

'Tis not enough that Plays are polish'd, chaste,  
 Or trickt in all the harlotry of taste,  
 They must have *passion* too; beyond controul 150  
 Transporting where they please the hearer's soul.  
 With those that smile, our face in smiles appears;  
 With those that weep, our cheeks are bath'd in tears:  
 To make *me* grieve, be first *your* anguish shown,  
 And I shall feel your sorrows like my own. 155  
 Peleus, and Telephus! unless your stile  
 Suit with your circumstance, I'll sleep, or smile;  
 Features of sorrow mournful words require;  
 Anger in menace speaks, and words of fire:

Ludentem, lasciva; severum, seria dictu.

Format enim Natura prius nos intus ad omnem

Fortunarum habitum; juvat, aut impellit ad iram,

Aut ad humum mœrore gravi deducit, et angit: 110

Post effert animi motus interprete linguâ.

Si dicentis erunt fortunis absona dicta,

Romani tollent equitesque patresque chachinum.

Intererit multum, Divusne loquatur, an heros;

Maturusne senex, an adhuc florente juventâ

115

Fervidus; an matrona potens, an sedula nutrix;

Mercatorne vagus, cultorne virentis agelli;

Colchus, an Assyrius; Thebis nutritus, an Argis.

Aut



EPISTLE TO THE PISOS. 11

The playful prattle in a frolick vein, 160  
 And the severe affect a serious strain;  
 For Nature first, to every varying wind  
 Of changeful fortune, shapes the pliant mind;  
 Soothes it with pleasure, or to rage provokes,  
 Or brings it to the ground by sorrow's heavy strokes; 165  
 Then of the joys that charm'd, or woes that wrung,  
 Forces expression from the faithful tongue:  
 But if the actor's words belie his state,  
 And speak a language foreign to his fate,  
 Romans shall crack their sides, and all the town 170  
 Join, horse and foot, to laugh th' impostor down.

Much boots the speaker's character to mark:  
 God, heroe; grave old man, or hot young spark;  
 Matron, or busy nurse; who's us'd to roam  
 Trading abroad, or ploughs his field at home: 175  
 If Colchian, or Assyrian, fill the scene,  
 Theban, or Argian, note the shades between!

Aut famam sequere, aut sibi convenientia finge,  
Scriptor. Honoratum si forte reponis Achillem, 120  
Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,  
Jura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis.  
Sit Medea ferox invictaque, flebilis Ino,  
Perfidus Ixion, Io vaga, tristis Orestes.

Si quid inexpertum scenæ committis, et audes 125  
Personam formare novam; servetur ad imum  
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.

Difficile est propriè communia dicere: tuque  
Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,  
Quàm si proferres ignota indictaque primus. 130  
Publica materies privati juris erit, si  
Non circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem;

Nec

Follow the Voice of Fame; or if you feign,  
 The fabled plan consistently sustain!  
 If great Achilles you bring back to view, 180  
 Shew him of active spirit, wrathful too;  
 Eager, impetuous, brave, and high of soul,  
 Always for arms, and brooking no controul:  
 Fierce let Medea seem, in horrors clad;  
 Perfidious be Ixion, Ino sad;  
 Io a wand'rer, and Orestes mad!

Should you, advent'ring novelty, engage 186  
 Some bold Original to walk the Stage,  
 Preserve it well; continu'd as begun;  
 True to itself in ev'ry scene, and one!

Yet hard the task to touch on untried facts: 190  
 Safer the Iliad to reduce to acts,  
 Than be the first new regions to explore,  
 And dwell on themes unknown, untold before,  
 Quit but the vulgar, broad, and beaten round, 195  
 The publick field becomes your private ground:



Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere, fidus  
 Interpres; nec desilies imitator in arctum,  
 Unde pedem proferre pudor vetet aut operis lex. 135

Nec sic incipies, ut scriptor cyclicus olim :

FORTUNAM PRIAMI CANTABO, ET NOBILE BELLUM.

Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu?

Parturiunt montes: nascetur ridiculus mus.

Quanto rectius hic, qui nil molitur inepte ! 140

DIC MIHI, MUSA, VIRUM, CAPTÆ POST MOENIA TROJÆ,

QUI MORES HOMINUM MULTORUM VIDIT ET URBES.

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem

Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat,

Antiphaten, Scyllamque, et cum Cylope Charibdin. 145

Nec

Nor word for word too faithfully translate;  
 Nor leap at once into a narrow strait,  
 A copyist so close, that rule and line  
 Curb your free march, and all your steps confine! 200

Be not your opening fierce, in accents bold,  
 Like the rude ballad-monger's chaunt of old;  
 "The fall of Priam, the great Trojan King!  
 "Of the right noble Trojan War, I sing!"  
 Where ends this Boaster, who, with voice of thunder, 205  
 Wakes Expectation, all agape with wonder?

'The mountains labour! hush'd are all the spheres!  
 And, oh ridiculous! a mouse appears.  
 How much more modestly begins HIS song,  
 Who labours, or imagines, nothing wrong! 210

"Say, Muse, the Man, who, after Troy's disgrace,  
 "In various cities mark'd the human race!"  
 Not flame to smoke he turns, but smoke to light,  
 Kindling from thence a stream of glories bright:  
 Antiphates, the Cyclops, raise the theme; 215  
 Scylla, Charibdis, fill the pleasing dream.

E

He

Nec reditum Diomedis ab interitu Melcagri,  
Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo:  
Semper ad eventum festinat; et in medias res,  
Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit: et quæ  
Desperat tractata nitescere posse, relinquit: 150  
Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,  
Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum.

Tu, quid ego et populus mecum desideret, audi;  
Si fautoris eges aulea manentis, et usque  
Sessuri, donec cantor, Vos plaudite, dicat: 155  
Ætatis cujusque notandi sunt tibi mores,  
Mobilibusque decor naturis dandus et annis.  
Reddere qui voces jam scit puer, et pede certo  
Signat humum; gestit paribus colludere, et iram  
Colligit ac ponit temerè, et mutatur in horas. 160

Imberbis.



He goes not back to Meleager's death,  
 With Diomed's return to run you out of breath;  
 Nor from the Double Egg, the tale to mar,  
 Traces the story of the Trojan War: 220

Still hurrying to th' event, at once he brings  
 His hearer to the heart and soul of things;  
 And what won't bear the light, in shadow flings.  
 So well he feigns, so well contrives to blend  
 Fiction and Truth, that all his labours tend  
 True to one point, persu'd from end to end.

Hear now, what I expect, and all the town,  
 If you would wish applause your play to crown,  
 And patient sitters, 'till the cloth goes down!

*Man's several ages* with attention view, 230  
 His flying years, and changing nature too.

*The Boy*, who now his words can freely sound,  
 And with a steadier footstep prints the ground,  
 Places in playfellows his chief delight,  
 Quarrels, shakes hands, and cares not wrong or right: 235  
 Sway'd by each fav'rite bauble's short-liv'd pow'r,  
 In smiles, in tears, all humours ev'ry hour.

Imberbis juvenis, tandem custode remoto,  
 Gaudet equis canibusque et aprici gramine campi;  
 Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper,  
 Utilium tardus provisor, prodigus æris,  
 Sublimis, cupidusque, et amata relinquere pernix. 165

Conversis studiis, ætas animusque virilis  
 Quærit opes et amicitias, inservit honori;  
 Commisisse cavet quod mox mutare laboret.

Multa senem circumveniunt incommoda; vel quod  
 Quærit, et inventis miser abstinet, ac timet uti; 170  
 Vel quod res omnes timidè gelidèque ministrat,  
 Dilator, spe lentus, iners, pavidusque futuri;

Difficilis,

*The beardless Youth*, at length from tutor free,  
 Loves horses, hounds, the field, and liberty :  
 Pliant as wax, to vice his easy soul, 240  
 Marble to wholesome counsel and controul;  
 Improvident of good, of wealth profuse;  
 High; fond, yet fickle; generous, yet loose.

To graver studies, new pursuits inclin'd,  
*Manhood*, with growing years, brings change of mind: 245  
 Seeks riches, friends; with thirst of honour glows;  
 And all the meanness of ambition knows;  
 Prudent, and wary, on each deed intent,  
 Fearful to act, and afterwards repent.

Evil in various shapes *Old Age* surrounds; 250  
 Riches his aim, in riches he abounds;  
 Yet what he fear'd to gain, he dreads to lose;  
 And what he sought as useful, dares not use.  
 Timid and cold in all he undertakes,  
 His hand from doubt, as well as weakness, shakes; 255  
 Hope makes him tedious, fond of dull delay;  
 Dup'd by to-morrow, tho' he dies to-day;

Ill-humour'd,



Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti  
Se puero, censor, castigatoreque minorum.

Multa ferunt anni venientes commoda secum, 175

Multa recedentes adimunt: ne forte seniles

Mandentur juveni partes, pueroque viriles.

Semper in adjunctis ævoque morabimur aptis.

Aut agitur res in scenis, aut acta refertur:

Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem, 180

Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quæ

Ipse sibi tradit spectator. non tamen intus

Digna geri promes in scenam: multaue tolles

Ex oculis, quæ mox narret facundia præfens:

Ill-humour'd, querulous; yet loud in praise  
Of all the mighty deeds of former days;  
When *he* was young, good heavens, what glorious times!  
Unlike the present age, that teems with crimes!

Thus years advancing many comforts bring,  
And, flying, bear off many on their wing:  
Confound not youth with age, nor age with youth,  
But mark their several characters with truth! 265

Events are on the stage in act display'd,  
Or by narration, if unseen, convey'd.  
Cold is the tale distilling thro' the ear,  
Filling the soul with less dismay and fear,  
Than where spectators view, like standers-by, 270  
The deed submitted to the faithful eye.  
Yet force not on the stage, to wound the sight,  
Acts that should pass within, and shun the light!  
Many there are the eye should ne'er behold,  
But touching Eloquence in time unfold: 275

Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet; 185

Aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus;

Aut in avem Procne vertatur, Cadmus in anguem.

Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.

Neve minor, neu sit quinto productior actu

Fabula, quæ posci vult, et spectata reponi. 190

Nec Deus interfit, nisi dignus vindice nodus

Inciderit: nec quarta loqui persona laboret.

Actoris partes Chorus, officiumque virile

Defendat: neu quid medios intercinat actus,

Quod non proposito conducatur et hæreat apte. 195

Ille bonis faveatque, et concilietur amicis,

Et regat iratos, et amet peccare timentes:

Ille



EPISTLE TO THE POETS. 17

Who on Medea's parricide can look?  
View horrid Atreus human garbage cook?  
If a bird's feathers I see Progne take,  
If I see Cadmus slide into a snake,  
My faith revolts; and I condemn outright 280  
The fool that shews me such a silly sight.

Let not your play have *fewer acts* than *five*,  
Nor *more*, if you would wish it run and thrive;  
*Draw down no God*, unworthily betray'd,  
Unless some great occasion ask his aid! 285  
Let no *fourth person*, labouring for a speech,  
Make in the dialogue a needless breach!

An actor's part the CHORUS should sustain,  
Gentle in all its office, and humane;  
Chaunting no Odes between the acts, that seem 290  
Unapt, or foreign to the general theme.  
Let it to Virtue prove a guide and friend,  
Curb tyrants, and the humble good defend!

18 EPISTOLA AD PISONES.

Ille dapes laudet mensæ brevis, ille salubrem  
 Justitiam, legesque, et apertis otia portis:  
 Ille tegat commissa, Deosque precetur et oret, 200  
 Ut redeat miseris, abeat fortuna superbis.

Tibia non, ut nunc, orichalco vincta, tubæque  
 Æmula; sed tenuis, simplexque foramine paucò,  
 Aspirare et adesse choris erat utilis, atque  
 Nondum spissa nimis complere sedilia flatu: 205  
 Quo sanè populus numerabilis, utpote parvus  
 Et frugi castusque verecundusque coibat.

Postquam cœpit agros extendere victor, et urbem  
 Laxior amplecti murus, vinoque diurno  
 Placari Genius festis impune diebus, 210

Loud let it praise the joys that Temperance waits;  
 Of Justice sing, the real health of States;  
 The Laws; and Peace, secure with open gates!  
 Faithful and secret, let it heav'n invoke  
 To turn from the unhappy fortune's stroke,  
 And all its vengeance on the proud provoke!

*The Pipe* of old, as yet with brass unbound, 300  
 Nor rivalling, as now, the Trumpet's sound,  
 But slender, simple, and its stops but few,  
 Breath'd to the Chorus; and was useful too:  
 For seats extended, and extending still,  
 Requir'd not pow'rful blasts their space to fill; 305  
 When the thin audience, pious, frugal, chaste,  
 With modest mirth indulg'd their sober taste.  
 But soon as the proud Victor spurns all bounds,  
 And growing Rome a wider wall surrounds;  
 When noontide cups, and the diurnal bowl, 310  
 Licence on holidays a flow of soul;



Accessit numerisque modisque licentia major,  
 Indoctus quid enim sciret liberque laborum,  
 Rusticus urbano confusus, turpis honesto?  
 Sic priscæ motumque et luxuriam addidit arti  
 Tibicen, traxitque vagus per pulpita vestem: 215  
 Sic etiam fidibus voces crevere severis,  
 Et tulit eloquium insolitum facundia præceptis;  
 Utiliumque sagax rerum, et divina futuri,  
 Sortilegis non discrepuit sententia Delphis.

Carminē qui tragico vilem certavit ob hircum, 220  
 Mox etiam agrestes Satyros nudavit, et asper  
 Incolumi gravitate jocum tentavit: eò quod

Illecebris

A richer stream of melody is known,  
Numbers more copious, and a fuller tone.

----- For what, alas! could the unpractis'd ear  
Of rusticks, revelling o'er country cheer, 315

A motley groupel high, low; and froth, and scum;  
Distinguish but shrill squeak, and dronish hum?-----

The Piper, grown luxuriant in his art,  
With dance and flowing vest embellishes his part!

Now too, its pow'rs increas'd, *the Lyre severe* 320

With richer numbers smites the list'ning ear:

Sudden bursts forth a flood of rapid song,

Rolling a tide of eloquence along:

Useful, prophetic, wise, the strain divine

Breathes all the spirit of the Delphick shrine. 325

He who the prize, a filthy goat, to gain,  
At first contended in the tragick strain,  
Soon too---tho' rude, the graver mood unbroke,---  
Stript the rough SATYRS, and essay'd a joke:

Illecebris erat et gratâ novitate morandus  
Spectator functusque sacris, et potus, et exlex.  
Verum ita riores, ita commendare dicaces 225  
Conveniet Satyros, ita vertere seria ludo;  
Ne quicumque Deus, quicumque adhibebitur heros  
Regali conspectus in auro nuper et ostro,  
Migret in obscuras humili sermone tabernas:  
Aut, dum vitat humum, nubes et inania captet. 230  
Effutire leves indigna tragoedia versus,  
Ut festis matrona moveri iussa diebus,  
Intererit Satyris paulum pudibunda protervis.  
Non ego inornata et dominantia nomina solum  
Verbaque, Pisones, Satyrorum scriptor amabo: 235  
Nec sic enitar tragico differre color,



EPISTLE TO THE PISOS. 20

For holiday-spectators, flush'd, and wild, 330  
 With new conceits, and mummeries, were beguil'd.  
 Yet should the Satyrs so chastise their mirth,  
 Temp'ring the jest that gives their fallies birth;  
 Changing from grave to gay, so keep the mean,  
 That God or Heroe of the lofty scene, 335  
 In royal gold and purple seen but late,  
 May ne'er in cots obscure debase his state,  
 Lost in low language; nor in too much care  
 To shun the ground, grasp clouds, and empty air.  
 With an indignant pride, and coy disdain, 340  
 Stern Tragedy rejects too light a vein:  
 Like a grave Matron, destin'd to advance  
 On solemn festivals to join the dance,  
 Mixt with the shaggy tribe of Satyrs rude,  
 She'll hold a sober mien, and act the prude. 345  
 Let me not, Pisos, in the Sylvan scene,  
 Use abject terms alone, and phrases mean;  
 Nor of high Tragick colouring afraid,  
 Neglect too much the difference of shade!

Darus

Ut nihil intersit Davusne loquatur et audax  
 Pythias emuncto lucrata Simone talentum,  
 An custos famulusque Dei Silenus alumni.

Ex noto fictum carmen sequar : ut sibi quivis 240  
 Speret idem ; fudet multum, frustra que laboret  
 Ausus idem : tantum series juncturaque pollet :  
 Tantum de medio sumtis accedit honoris.

Silvis deducti caveant, me iudice, Fauni,  
 Ne velut innati triviis, ac pene forenses, 245  
 Aut nimium teneris juvenentur versibus umquam,  
 Aut immunda crepent ignominiosaque dicta.  
 Offenduntur enim, quibus est equus, et pater, et res;  
 Nec, si quid fricti ciceris probat et nucis emtor,  
 Æquis accipiunt animis, donantve coronâ. 250

Davus may jest, pert Pythias may beguile 350  
 Simo of cash, in a familiar style;  
 The same low strain Silenus would disgrace,  
 Servant and guardian of the Godlike race.

Let me on subjects known my verse so frame,  
 So follow it, that each may hope the same; 355  
 Daring the same, and toiling to prevail,  
 May vainly toil, and only dare to fail!  
 Such virtues order and connection bring,  
 From common arguments such honours spring.

The woodland Fauns their origin should heed, 360  
 Take no town stamp, nor seem the city breed:  
 Nor let them, aping young gallants, repeat  
 Verses that run upon too tender feet;  
 Nor fall into a low, indecent stile,  
 Breaking dull jests to make the vulgar smile! 365  
 For higher ranks such ribaldry despise,  
 Condemn the Poet, and withhold the prize.



Syllaba longa brevi subjecta, vocatur Iambus,  
Pes citus : unde etiam Trimetris accrescere jussit  
Nomen Iambeis, cum senos redderet ictus  
Primus ad extremum similis sibi; non ita pridem,  
Tardior ut paulo graviorque veniret ad aures, 255  
Spondeos stabiles in jura paterna recepit  
Commodus et patiens: non ut de fede secundâ  
Cederet, aut quartâ socialiter. Hic et in Acci  
Nobilibus Trimetris apparet rarus, et Ennî.  
In scenam missus cum magno pondere versus, 260  
Aut operæ celeris nimium cura que carentis,  
Aut ignoratæ premit artis crimine turpi.

Non quivis videt immodulata poëmata judex:  
Et data Romanis venia est indigna poetis.

Idcircone

To a short Syllable a long subjoin'd  
 Forms an Iambick foot ; so light a kind,  
 That when six pure Iambicks roll'd along, 370  
 So nimbly mov'd, so trippingly the song,  
 The feet to half their number lost their claim,  
 And *Trimeter Iambicks* was their name.  
 Hence, that the measure might more grave appear,  
 And with a slower march approach the ear, 375  
 From the fourth foot, and second, not displac'd,  
 The steady spondee kindly it embrac'd;  
 Then in firm union socially unites,  
 Admitting the ally to equal rights.  
 Accius, and Ennius lines, thus duly wrought, 380  
 In their bold Trimeters but rarely fought:  
 Yet scenes o'erloaded with a verse of lead,  
 A mass of heavy numbers on their head,  
 Speak careless haste, neglect in ev'ry part,  
 Or shameful ignorance of the Poet's art. 385

" Not ev'ry Critick spies a faulty strain,  
 And pardon Roman Poets should disdain."

Idcircone vager, scribamque licenter? ut omnes  
 Visuros peccata putem mea; tutus et intra 266  
 Spem veniæ cautus? vitavi denique culpam,  
 Non laudem merui.

Vos exemplaria Græca

Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ.  
 At vestri proavi Plautinos et numeros, et 270  
 Laudavere sales; nimium patienter utrumque  
 (Ne dicam stultè) mirati: si modo ego et vos  
 Scimus inurbanum lepidò seponere dicto,  
 Legitimumque sonum digitis callemus et aure.  
 Ignotum tragicæ genus invenisse Camenæ 275  
 Dicitur, et plaustris vexisse poemata Thespis  
 Quæ canerent agerentque, peruncti facibus ora.



Shall I then all regard, all labour flight,  
 Break loose at once, and all at random write?  
 Or shall I fear that all my faults descry,  
 390 Viewing my errors with an Eagle eye,  
 And thence correctness make my only aim,  
 Pleas'd to be safe, and sure of 'scaping blame?  
 Thus I from faults indeed may guard my lays;  
 But neither they, nor I, can merit praise. 395

Pisos! be Græcian models your delight!  
 Night and day read them, read them day and night!  
 "Well! but our fathers Plautus lov'd to praise,  
 400 "Admir'd his humour, and approv'd his lays."  
 Yes; they saw both with a too partial eye,  
 Fond e'en to folly sure, if you and I  
 Know ribaldry from humour, chaste and terse,  
 Or can but scan, and have an ear for verse.

A kind of Tragick Ode unknown before,  
 THESPIS, 'tis said, invented first; and bore 405  
 Cart-loads of verse about, and with him went  
 A troop begrim'd, to sing and represent.

Next,

Post hunc personæ pallæque repertor honestæ,  
 Æschylus et modicis intravit pulpita tignis,  
 Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.  
 Successit Vetus his Comœdia, non sine multâ  
 Laude: sed in vitium libertas excidit, et vim  
 Dignam lege regi: lex est accepta; Chorusque  
 Turpiter obticuit, sublato jure nocendi.

Nil intentatum nostri liquere poetæ:  
 Nec nimium meruere decus, vestigia Græca  
 Ausi deferere, et celebrare domestica facta,  
 Vel qui Prætextas, vel qui docuere Togatas:  
 Nec virtute foret clarifve potentius armis,  
 Quam linguâ, Latium; si non offenderet unum---

Quemque

Next, ÆSCHYLUS, a Mask to shroud the face,  
 A Robe devis'd, to give the person grace ;  
 On humble rafters rais'd a Stage, and taught  
 The buskin'd actor, with *his* spirit fraught,  
 To breathe with dignity the lofty thought.  
 To these TH' OLD COMEDY of ancient days  
 Succeeded, and obtain'd no little praise ;  
 'Till Liberty, grown rank and run to seed, 415  
 Call'd for the hand of Law to pluck the weed :  
 The Statute past ; the slanderous Chorus, drown'd  
 In shameful silence, lost the pow'r to wound.

Nothing have Roman Poets left untried,  
 Nor added little to their Country's pride ; 420  
 Daring their Græcian Masters to forsake,  
 And for their themes Domestick Glories take ;  
 Whether *the Gown* prescrib'd a stile more mean,  
 Or the *Inwoven Purple* rais'd the scene :  
 Nor would the splendour of the Latian name 425  
 From arms, than Letters, boast a brighter fame,



Quemque poëtarum limæ labor et mora. Vos ô  
 Pompilius sanguis, carmen reprehendite, quod non  
 Multa dies et multa litura coërcuit, atque  
 Præfectum decies non castigavit ad unguem.

Ingenium miserâ quia fortunatius arte 295

Credit, et excludit sanos Helicone poëtas

Democritus ; bona pars non unguis ponere curat,

Non barbam, secreta petit loca, balnea vitat ;

Nanciscetur enim pretium nomenque poëtæ,

Si tribus Anticyris caput insanabile numquam 300

Tonfœri Licino commiserit. O ego lævus,

Qui purgor bilem sub verni temporis horam !

Non alius faceret meliora poëmata : verum

Had they not, scorning the laborious file,  
 Grudg'd time, to mellow and refine their stile,  
 But you, bright hopes of the Pompilian Blood,  
 Never the verse approve and hold as good, 430  
 'Till many a day, and many a blot has wrought  
 The polish'd work, and chasten'd ev'ry thought,  
 By tenfold labour to perfection brought!

Because Democritus thinks wretched Art  
 Too mean with Genius to sustain a part, 435  
 To Helicon allowing no pretence,  
 'Till the mad bard has lost all common sense;  
 Many there are, their nails who will not pare,  
 Or trim their beards, or bathe, or take the air:  
 For he, no doubt, must be a bard renown'd, 440  
 That head with deathless laurel must be crown'd,  
 Tho' past the pow'r of Hellebore insane,  
 Which no vile Cutberd's razor'd hands profane.  
 Ah luckless I, each spring that purge the bile!  
 Or who'd write better? but 'tis scarce worth while: 445

Nil tanti est: ergo fungar vice cotis, acutum

Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exfors ipsa secandi. 305

Munus et officium, nil scribens ipse, docebo;

Unde parentur opes; quid alat formetque poetam;

Quid deceat, quid non; quò virtus, quò ferat error,

Scribendi rectè, sapere est et principium et fons.

Rem tibi Socraticæ poterunt ostendere chartæ; 310

Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur.

Qui didicit patriæ quid debeat, et quid amicis;

Quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus et hospes;

Quod sit conscripti, quod iudicis officium; quæ

Partes in bellum missi ducis; ille profecto 315

Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique.

Respicere



So as mere hone, my services I pledge;  
 Edgeless itself, it gives the steel an edge:  
 No writer I, to writers thus impart  
 The nature and the duty of their art:  
 Whence springs the fund; what forms the bard, to know;  
 What nourishes his pow'rs, and makes them grow;  
 What's fit or unfit; whither genius tends;  
 And where fond ignorance and dulness ends.

In Wisdom, Moral Wisdom, to excell,  
 Is the chief cause and spring of writing well. 455  
 Draw elements from the Socratick source,  
 And, full of matter, words will rise of course.  
 He who hath learnt a patriot's glorious flame;  
 What friendship asks; what filial duties claim;  
 The ties of blood; and secret links that bind 460  
 The heart to strangers, and to all mankind;  
 The Senator's, the Judge's peaceful care,  
 And sterner duties of the Chief in war!  
 These who hath studied well, will all engage  
 In functions suited to their rank and age. 465

Respicere exemplar vitæ morumque jabebo  
 Doctum imitatore, et veras hinc ducere voces.  
 Interdum speciosa locis, morataque recte  
 Fabula, nullius veneris, sine pondere et arte, 320  
 Valdius oblectat populum, meliusque moratur,  
 Quam versus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ.

Graii ingenium, Graii dedit ore rotundo  
 Musa loqui, præter laudem, nullius avaris.  
 Romani pueri longis rationibus assem 325  
 Discunt in partes centum diducere. Dicat  
 Filius Albini, si de quincunce remota est  
 Uncia, quid superet? poteras dixisse, triens. Eu!  
 Rem poteris servare tuam. Redit uncia: quid fit?

Semis.

On Nature's pattern too I'll bid him look,  
 And copy manners from her living book.  
 Sometimes 'twill chance, a poor and barren tale,  
 Where neither excellence nor art prevail,  
 With now and then a passage of some merit, 470  
 And Characters sustain'd, and drawn with spirit,  
 Pleases thẽ people more, and more obtains,  
 Than tuneful nothings, mere poetick strains.

*The Sons of Greece* the fav'ring Muse inspir'd,  
 Inflam'd their souls, and with true genius fir'd : 475  
 Taught by the Muse, they sung the loftiest lays,  
 And knew no avarice but that of praise.

*The Lads of Rome*, to study fractions bound,  
 Into an hundred parts can split a pound.

"Say, Albin's Hopeful ! from five twelfths an ounce, 480

"And what remains?"—"a Third."—"Well said,

"young Pounce !

"You're a made man!--but add an ounce,--what then?"

"A Half." "Indeed ! surprising ! good again!"



Semis. An hæc animos ærugo et cura peculi 330

Cum semel imbuerit speramus carmina fingi

Possè linenda cedro, et levi servanda cupresso?

Aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare poëtæ;

Aut simul et jucunda et idonea dicere vitæ.

Quicquid præcipies, esto brevis: ut cito dicta 335

Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.

Omne supervacuum pleno de pectore manat.

Ficta voluptatis causâ sint proxima veris:

Ne, quodcumque volet, poscat sibi fabula credi;

Neu pransæ Lamiae vivum puerum extrahat alvo. 340

Centuriæ seniorum agitant expertia frugis:

Celsi prætereunt austerâ poëmata Rhamnes.

Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci,

Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.

Hic

From minds debas'd with such a sordid lust,  
 Canker'd and eaten up with this vile rust, 485  
 Can we a verse, that gives the Genius scope,  
 Worthy the Cedar, and the Cypress, hope?

Instruction to convey and give delight,  
 Or both at once to compass, Poets write.

Short be your precepts, and th' impression strong, 490  
 That minds may catch them quick, and hold them long!  
 The bosom full, and satisfied the taste,  
 All that runs over will but run to waste.

Fictions, to please, like truths must meet the eye,  
 Nor must the Fable tax our faith too high. 495  
 Shall Lamia in our fight her sons devour,  
 And give them back alive the self-same hour?

The Old, if *Moral's* wanting, damn the Play;  
 And *Sentiment* disgusts the Young and Gay.

He who instruction and delight can blend, 500  
 Please with his fancy, with his moral mend,

Hic meret æra liber Sosis, hic et mare transit, 345  
Et longum noto scriptori prorogat ævum.

Sunt delicta tamen, quibus ignovisse velimus.  
Nam neque chorda sonum reddit, quem vult manus et  
mens;

Poscentique gravem persæpe remittit acutum:  
Nec semper feriet, quodcumque minabitur, arcus. 350

Verum ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis  
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,  
Aut humana parum cavit natura. quid ergo est?

Ut scriptor si peccat idem librarius usque,  
Quamvis est mōitus, veniā caret; ut citharædus 355  
Ridetur, chorda qui semper oberrat eadem;



Hits the nice point, and every vote obtains :  
 His work a fortune to the Soffi gains ;  
 Flies over seas, and on the wings of Fame  
 Carries from age to age the writer's deathless name. 505

Yet there are faults that we may pardon too :  
 For ah ! the string won't always answer true ;  
 But, spite of hand and mind, the treach'rous harp  
 Will sound a flat, when we intend a sharp :  
 The bow, not always constant and the same, 510  
 Will sometimes carry wide, and lose its aim.  
 But in the verse where many beauties shine,  
 I blame not here and there a feeble line ;  
 Nor take offence at ev'ry idle trip,  
 Where haste prevails, or nature makes a slip. 515  
 What's the result then ? Why thus stands the case.  
 As *the Transcriber*, in the self-same place  
 Who still mistakes, tho' warn'd of his neglect,  
 No pardon for his blunders can expect ;  
 Or as *the Minstrel* his disgrace must bring, 520  
 Who harps for ever on the same false string ;

Sic mihi qui multum cessat, fit Chærilus ille,  
Quem bis terve bonum, cum risu miror; et idem  
Indignor, quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.  
Verum operi longo fas est obrepere somnum. 360

Ut pictura, poësis : erit quæ, si propius stes,  
Te capiat magis; et quædam, si longius abstes :  
Hæc amat obscurum; volet hæc sub luce videri,  
Judicis argutum quæ non formidat acumen:  
Hæc placuit semel; hæc decies repetita placebit. 365

O major juvenum, quamvis et voce paternâ  
Fingeris ad rectum, et per te sapis; hoc tibi dictum  
Tolle memor : certis medium et tolerabile rebus

Recte

EPISTLE TO THE PISOS. 37

*The Poet* thus, from faults scarce ever free,  
 Becomes a very CHÆRILUS to me;  
 Who twice or thrice, by some adventure rare,  
 Stumbling on beauties, makes me smile and stare; 525  
*Me*, who am griev'd and vex'd to the extreme,  
 If Homer seem to nod, or chance to dream:  
 Tho' in a work of length o'erlabour'd sleep  
 At intervals may, not unpardon'd, creep.

Poems and Pictures are adjudg'd alike; 530  
 Some charm us near, and some at distance strike:  
*This* loves the shade; *this* challenges the light,  
 Daring the keenest Critick's Eagle sight;  
*This* once has pleas'd; *this* ever will delight.

O THOU, MY PISO'S ELDER HOPE AND PRIDE! 535  
 THO' WELL A FATHER'S VOICE THY STEPS CAN GUIDE;  
 THO' INBRED SENSE WHAT'S WISE AND RIGHT CAN TELL,  
 REMEMBER THIS FROM ME, AND WEIGH IT WELL!  
 In certain things, things neither high nor proud,  
*Middling* and *passable* may be allow'd.



Rectè concedi: consultus juris, et actor  
Causarum mediocris, abest virtute disertis 370  
Messallæ, nec scit quantum Cascellius Aulus;  
Sed tamen in pretio est: mediocribus esse poëtis  
Non homines, non Dî, non concessere columnæ.  
Ut gratas inter mensas symphonia discors,  
Et crassum unguentum, et Sardo cum melle papaver 375  
Offendunt, poterat duci quia cœna sine istis;  
Sic animis natum inventumque poema juvandis,  
Si paulum summo decessit, vergit ad imum.

Ludere qui nescit, campestribus abstinet armis;  
Indoctusque pilæ, discive, trochive, quiescit; 380  
Ne spissæ risum tollant impune coronæ:  
Qui nescit versus, tamen audet fingere. Quid nî?

A *moderate* proficient in the laws,

A *moderate* defender of a cause,

Boasts not Messala's pleadings, nor is deem'd

Aulus in Jurisprudence; yet esteem'd:

But *middling* Poets, or *degrees in Wit*, 545

Nor men, nor Gods, nor rubrick-posts admit.

At festivals, as musick out of tune,

Ointment, or honey, rank, disgust us soon,

Because they're not essential to the guest,

And might be spar'd, unless the very best; 550

Thus Poetry, so exquisite of kind,

Of Pleasure born, to charm the soul design'd,

If it fall short but little of the first,

Is counted last, and rank'd among the worst.

The Man, unapt for sports of fields and plains, 555

From implements of exercise abstains;

For ball, or quoit, or hoop, without the skill,

Dreading the croud's derision, he sits still:

In Poetry he boasts as little art,

And yet in Poetry he dares take part: 560

And

Liber et ingenuus; præsertim census equestrem  
Summam nummorum, vitioque remotus ab omni.

Tu nihil invitâ dices faciesve Minervâ: 385

Id tibi iudicium est, ea mens: si quid tamen olim

Scripseris, in Metii descendat iudicis aures,

Et patris, et nostras; nonumque prematur in annum.

Membranis intus positis, delere licebit

Quod non edideris: nescit vox missa reverti. 390

Silvestres homines facer interpretesque Deorum

Cædibus et victu sædo deterruit Orpheus;

Dictus ob hoc lenire tigres rabidosque leones.

Dictus et Amphion, Thebanæ conditor arcis,

Saxa movere sono testudinis, et prece blandâ 395

Ducere



And why not? he's a Gentleman, with clear  
 Good forty thousand sesterces a year;  
 A freeman too; and all the world allows,  
 "As honest as the skin between his brows!"  
 Nothing, in spite of Genius, you'll commence; 565  
 Such is your judgment, such your solid sense!  
 But if you should hereafter write, the verse  
 To Metius, to your Sire, to me, rehearse.  
 Let it sink deep in their judicious ears!  
 Weigh the work well; *and keep it back nine years!* 570  
 Papers unpublish'd you may blot or burn:  
 A word, once utter'd, never can return.

The barb'rous natives of the shaggy wood  
 From horrible repasts, and acts of blood,  
 ORPHEUS, a priest, and heav'nly teacher, brought, 575  
 And all the charities of nature taught:  
 Whence he was said fierce tigers to allay,  
 And sing the Savage Lion from his prey.  
 Within the hollow of AMPHION's shell  
 Such pow'rs of sound were lodg'd, so sweet a spell! 580  
 That

Ducere quo vellet. fuit hæc sapientia quondam,  
 Publica privatis secernere, sacra profanis;  
 Concubitu prohibere vago; dare jura maritis;  
 Oppida moliri; leges incidere ligno.  
 Sic honor et nomen divinis vatibus atque  
 Carminibus venit. post hos insignis Homerus  
 Tyrtæusque mares animos in Martia bella  
 Versibus exacuit. dictæ per carmina fortes,  
 Et vitæ monstrata via est; et gratia regum.

That stones were said to move, and at his call,  
Charm'd to his purpose, form'd the Theban Wall.

The love of Moral Wisdom to infuse  
*These* were the Labours of THE ANCIENT MUSE.

“ To mark the limits, where the barriers stood 585

“ ’Twixt Private Int’rest, and the Publick Good;

“ To raise a pale, and firmly to maintain

“ The bound, that sever’d Sacred from Profane ;

“ To shew the ills Promiscuous Love should dread,

“ And teach the laws of the Connubial Bed ; 590

“ Mankind dispers’d, to Social Towns to draw ;

“ And on the Sacred Tablet grave the Law.”

Thus fame and honour crown’d the Poet’s line ;

His work immortal, and himself divine !

Next lofty HOMER, and TYRTÆUS strung 595

Their Epick Harps, and Songs of Glory sung ;

Sounding a charge, and calling to the war

The Souls that bravely feel, and nobly dare.

In *Verse* the Oracles their sense make known,

In *Verse* the road and rule of life is shewn ;



Pieriis tentata modis, ludusque repertus, 404

Et longorum operum finis; ne forte pudori

Sit tibi Musa lyrae solers, et cantor Apollo.

Natura fieret laudabile carmen, an arte;

Quæsitum est. Ego nec studium sine divite venâ,

Nec rude quid possit video ingenium: alterius sic 410

Altera poscit opem res, et conjurat amicè.

Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam,

Multa tulit fecitque puer; sudavit et alfit;

Abstinet venere et vino. qui Pythia cantat

Tibicen;

*Verse* to the Poet royal favour brings, 600

And leads the Muses to the throne of Kings;

*Verse* too, the varied Scene and sports prepares,

Brings rest to toil, and balm to all our cares.

DEEM THEN WITH REV'RENCE OF THE GLORIOUS FIRE,

BREATH'D BY THE MUSE, THE MISTRESS OF THE LYRE!

BLUSH NOT TO OWN HER POW'R, HER GLORIOUS FLAME;

NOR THINK APOLLO, LORD OF SONG, THY SHAME!

Whether good verse of Nature is the fruit,

Or form'd by Art, has long been in dispute,

But what can Labour in a barren soil, 610

Or what rude Genius profit without toil?

The wants of one the other must supply;

Each finds in each a friend and firm ally.

Much has the Youth, who pressing in the race

Pants for the promis'd goal and foremost place, 615

Suffer'd and done; borne heat, and cold's extremes,

And Wine and Women scorn'd, as empty dreams.

Tibicen, didicit prius, extimuitque magistrum. 415

Nunc satis est dixisse, Ego mira poemata pango:

Occupet extremum scabies : mihi turpe relinqui est,

Et, quod non didici, fane nescire fateri.

Ut præco, ad merces turbam qui cogit emendas ;

Affentatores jubet ad lucrum ire poeta 420

Dives agris, dives positus in fœnore nummis.

Si vero est, unctum qui rectè ponere possit,

Et spondere levi pro paupere, et eripere artis

Litibus implicitum ; mirabor, si sciet inter-

Noscere mendacem verumque beatus amicum. 425

Tu



The Piper, who the Pythian Measure plays,  
In fear of a hard master learnt the lays:  
But if to desp'rate *verse* I would apply, 620  
What needs instruction? 'tis enough to cry,  
" I can write Poems, to strike wonder blind!  
" Plague take the hindmost! Why leave *me* behind?  
" Or why extort a truth, so mean and low,  
" That what I have not learnt, I cannot know?" 625

As the sly Hawker, who a sale prepares,  
Collects a croud of bidders for his Wares,  
The Poet, warm in land, and rich in cash,  
Assembles flatterers, brib'd to praise his trash.  
But if he keeps a table, drinks good wine, 630  
And gives his hearers handsomely to dine;  
If he'll stand bail, and 'tangled debtors draw  
Forth from the dirty cobwebs of the law;  
Much shall I praise his luck, his sense commend,  
If he discern the flatterer from the friend.

Tu seu donaris seu quid donare voles cui;  
 Nolito ad versus tibi factos ducere plenum  
 Lætitiæ; clamabit enim, Pulchrè, bene, rectè!  
 Pallefcet; super his etiam stillabit amicis  
 Ex oculis rorem; saliet; tundet pede terram. 430  
 Ut qui conducti plorant in funere, dicunt  
 Et faciunt prope plura dolentibus ex animo: sic  
 Derisor vero plus laudatore movetur.  
 Reges dicuntur multis urgere culullis,  
 Et torquere mero quem perpexiffè laborant. 435  
 An fit amicitia dignus. fi carmina condēs,  
 Nunquam te fallant animi sub vulpe latentes.  
 Quintilio fi quid recitares: Corrige fodes  
 Hoc, aiebat, et hoc. melius te poffe negares,

Is there a man to whom you've given aught?  
 Or mean to give? let no such man be brought  
 To hear your verses! for at every line,  
 Bursting with joy, he'll cry, "Good! rare! divine!"  
 The blood will leave his cheek; his eyes will fill 640  
 With tears, and soon the friendly dew distill:  
 He'll leap with extacy, with rapture bound;  
 Clap with both hands; with both feet beat the ground.  
 As mummers, at a funeral hir'd to weep,  
 More coil of woe than real mourners keep, 645  
 More mov'd appears the laughter in his sleeve,  
 Than those who truly praise, or smile, or grieve.  
 Kings have been said to ply repeated bowls,  
 Urge deep carousals, to unlock the souls  
 Of those, whose loyalty they wish'd to prove, 650  
 And know, if false, or worthy of their love:  
 You then, to writing verse if you're inclin'd,  
 Beware the Spaniel with the Fox's mind!

Quintilius, when he heard you ought recite,  
 Cried, "prithee, alter *this*! and make *that* right!" 655

ni



Bis terque expertum frustra? delere jubebat, 440

Et male ter natos incudi reddere versus.

Si defendere delictum, quam vertere, malle;

Nullum ultra verbum, aut operam insumebat inanem,

Quin sine rivali teque et tua solus amares.

Vir bonus et prudens versus reprehendet inertes; 445

Culpabit duros; incomptis allinet atrum

Transverso calamo signum; ambitiosa recidet

Ornamenta; parum claris lucem dare coget;

Arguet ambiguè dictum; mutanda notabit;

Fiet Aristarchus; non dicet, Cur ego amicum 450

Offendam in nugis? Hæ nugæ seria ducent

But if your pow'r to mend it you denied,  
 Swearing that twice and thrice in vain you tried;  
 "Then blot it out! (he cried) it must be terse:  
 "Back to the anvil with your ill-turn'd verse!"

Still if you chose the error to defend, 660  
 Rather than own, or take the pains to mend,  
 He said no more; no more vain trouble took;  
 But left you to admire yourself and book.

The Man, in whom Good Sense and Honour join,  
 Will blame the harsh, reprove the idle line; 665  
 The rude, all grace neglected or forgot,  
 Eras'd at once, will vanish at his blot;  
 Ambitious ornaments he'll lop away;  
 On things obscure he'll make you let in day;  
 Loose and ambiguous terms he'll not admit, 670  
 And take due note of ev'ry change that's fit.  
 A very ARISTARCHUS he'll commence;  
 Not coolly say---"Why give my friend offence?  
 These are but trifles!"---No; these trifles lead  
 To serious mischiefs, if he don't succeed; 675

L

While

In mala derisum semel, exceptumque sinistrè.  
Ut mala quem scabies aut morbus regius urget,  
Aut fanaticus error, et iracunda Diana;  
Vesantum tetigisse timent fugiuntque poetam, 455  
Qui sapiunt: agitant pueri, incautique sequuntur.  
Hic, dum sublimis versus ructatur, et errat,  
Si veluti merulis intentus decedit auceps.  
In puteum, foveamve; licet, Succurrite, longum  
Clamet, io cives: non sit qui tollere curet. 460  
Si curet quis opem ferre, et demittere funem;  
Qui scis, an prudens huc se projecit, atque  
Servari nolet? dicam: Siculique poetæ  
Narrabo interitum.



While the poor friend in dark disgrace sits down,  
The butt and laughing-stock of all the town.

As one, eat up by Leprosy and Itch,  
Moonstruck, Possess'd, or hag-rid by a Witch,

A Frantick Bard puts men of sense to flight ; 680

His flaver they detest, and dread his bite :

All shun his touch ; except the giddy boys,  
Close at his heels, who hunt him down with noise.

While with his head erect he threatens the skies,  
Spouts verse, and walks without the help of eyes ; 685

Lost as a blackbird-catcher, should he pitch  
Into some open well, or gaping ditch ;

Tho' he call lustily " help, neighbours, help !"

No soul regards him, or attends his yelp.

Should one, too kind, to give him succour hope, 690

Wish to relieve him, and let down a rope ;

Forbear ! (I'll cry) for aught that you can tell,

By sheer design he jump'd into the well.

He wishes not you should preserve him, Friend !

Know you the old Sicilian Poet's end ? 695

Deus immortalis haberi

Dum cupit Empedocles, ardentem frigidus Ætnam 465

Infiluit. sit fas, liceatque perire poëtis.

Invitum qui servat, idem facit occidenti.

Nec semel hoc fecit; nec si retractus erit jam,

Fiet homo, et ponet famosæ mortis amorem.

Nec satis apparet, cur versus factitet; utrum 470

Minxerit in patrios cineres, an triste bidental

Moverit incestus: certe furit, ac velut urfus.

Objectos caveæ valuit è frangere clathros,

Indoctum

Empedocles, ambitious to be thought  
 A God, his name with Godlike honours fought,  
 Holding a worldly life of no account,  
 Leap'd coldly into Ætna's burning mount.---  
 Let Poets then with leave resign their breath, 700  
 Licens'd and priveleg'd to rush on death!  
 Who gives a man his life against his will,  
 Murders the man, as much as those who kill.  
 'Tis not *once* only he hath done this deed;  
 Nay, drag him forth! your kindness wo'n't succeed: 705  
 Nor will he take again a mortal's shame,  
 And lose the glory of a death of fame.  
 Nor is't apparent, *why* with verse he's wild:  
 Whether his father's ashes he defil'd;  
 Whether, the victim of incestuous love, 710  
 The Blasted Monument he striv'd to move:  
 Whate'er the cause, he raves; and like a Bear,  
 Burst from his cage, and loose in open air,



Indoctum doctumque fugat recitator acerbus.

Quem vero arripuit, tenet, occiditque legendo,

Non missura cutem, nisi plena cruroris, hirudo. 476

Learn'd and unlearn'd the Madman puts to flight,  
 They quick to fly, he bitter to recite !  
 What hapless soul he seizes, he holds fast ;  
 Rants, and repeats, and reads him dead at last :  
 Hangs on him, ne'er to quit, with ceaseless speech,  
 Till gorg'd and full of blood, a very Leech ! 719  
 11:7:19

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N O T E S

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EPISTLE TO THE PISOS.

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EPISTLES TO THE PISOS

## N O T E S.

I HAVE reserved the Notes to this place, that the reader might be left to his genuine feelings, and the natural impression on reading the Epistle, whether adverse or favourable to the idea I ventured to premise, concerning its Subject and Design. In the address to my learned and worthy friends I said little more than was necessary to open my plan, and to offer an excuse for my undertaking. The Notes descend to particulars, tending to illustrate and confirm my hypothesis, and adding occasional explanations of the original, chiefly intended for the use of the English Reader. I have endeavoured, according to the best of my ability, to follow the advice of RosCOMMON in the lines, which I have ventured to prefix to these Notes. How far I may be entitled to *the poetical blessing* promised by the Poet, the Publick must determine: but were I, avoiding arrogance, to renounce all claim to it, such an appearance of *Modesty* would include a charge of *Impertinence* for having hazarded this publication.



*Take pains the GENUINE MEANING to explore !*  
 There sweat, there strain, tug the laborious oar :  
*Search ev'ry comment, that your care can find ;*  
 Some here, some there, may hit the Poet's MIND :  
 Yet be not blindly guided by the *Throng* ;  
 The Multitude is always in the *Wrong*.  
 When things appear *unnatural* or *hard*,  
 Consult your AUTHOR, with HIMSELF compar'd !  
 Who knows what Blessing Phœbus may bestow,  
 And future Ages to your labour owe ?  
 Such *Secrets* are not easily found out,  
 But once *discover'd*, leave no room for doubt.  
 Truth stamps *conviction* in your ravish'd breast,  
 And *Peace* and *Joy* attend the GLORIOUS GUEST.

*Essay on Translated Verse*

THE

T H E

*ART of POETRY, an EPISTLE, &c.*

Q. HORATII FLACCI EPISTOLA AD PISONES.

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THE work of Horace, now under consideration, has been so long known, and so generally received, by the name of *The Art of Poetry*, that I have, on account of that notoriety, submitted this translation to the Publick, under that title, rather than what I hold to be the true one, viz. *Horace's EPISTLE TO THE PISOS*. The Author of the English Commentary has adopted the same title, though directly repugnant to his own system; and, I suppose, for the very same reason.

The title, in general a matter of indifference, is, in the present instance, of much consequence. On the title Julius Scaliger founded his invidious, and injudicious, attack. *De arte quares quid sentiam. Quid? equidem quod DE ARTE, SINE ARTE traditâ.* To the Title all the editors, and commentators, have particularly adverted; commonly preferring the Epistolary Denomination, but, in contradiction to that preference, almost universally inscribing the Epistle, *the Art of Poetry*. The conduct, however, of JASON DE NORES, a native of Cyprus, a learned and ingenious writer of the 16th. century, is very remarkable. In the year 1553 he published at Venice this work of Horace, accompanied with a commentary and notes, written in elegant latin, inscribing it, after Quintilian, *Q. Horatii Flacci LIBER DE ARTE POETICA* \*. The very next year, however, he printed at Paris a second edition, enriching his notes with many observations on Dante and Petrarch, and changing the title, after

\* I think it right to mention that I have never seen the first edition, published at Venice. With a copy of the second edition, printed at Paris, I was favoured by Dr. Warton of Winchester.



mature consideration, to *Q. Horatii Flacci EPISTOLA AD PISONES, de Arte Poeticâ*. His motives for this change he assigns in the following terms.

*Quare adductum me primum sciant AD INSCRIPTIONEM OPERIS IMMUTANDAM non levioribus de causis, & quod formam EPISTOLÆ, non autem LIBRI, in quo præcepta tradantur, vel ex ipso principio præ se ferat, & quod in vetustis exemplaribus Epistolarum libros subsequatur, & quod etiam summi et præstantissimi homines ita sentiant, & quod minimè nobis obstat Quintiliani testimonium, ut nonnullis videtur. Nam si LIBRUM appellat Quintilianus, non est cur non possit inter EPISTOLAS enumerari, cum et illæ ab Horatio in libros digestæ fuerint. Quod vero DE ARTE POETICA idem Quintilianus adjungat, nihil commoveor, cum et in EPISTOLIS præcepta de aliquâ re tradi possint, ab eodemque in omnibus penè, et in iis ad Scævam & Lollium præcipuè jam factum videatur, in quibus breviter eos instituit, quâ ratione apud majores facile versarentur.*

Desprez, the Dauphin Editor, retains both titles, but says, inclining to the Epistolary, *Attamen ARTEM POETICAM vix appellem cum Quintiliano et aliis: malim vero EPISTOLAM nuncupare cum nonnullis eruditis.* Monsieur Dacier inscribes it, properly enough, agreeable to the idea of Porphyry, *Q. Horatii Flacci DE ARTE POETICA LIBER; seu, EPISTOLA AD PISONES, PATREM, ET FILIOS.*

Julius Scaliger certainly stands convicted of critical malice by his poor cavil at the *SUPPOSED title*; and has betrayed his ignorance of the ease and beauty of Epistolary method, as well as the most gross misapprehension, by his ridiculous analysis of the work, resolving it into thirty-six parts. He seems, however, to have not ill conceived the genius of the poem, in saying that *it relished of SATIRE*. This he has urged in many parts of his Poeticks, particularly in the Dedicatory Epistle to his son, not omitting, however, his constant charge of *Art without Art*. *Horatius ARTEM cum inscripsit, ADEO SINE ULLA DOCET ARTE, UT SATYRÆ PROPIUS TOTUM OPUS ILLUD ESSE VIDEATUR.* This comes almost home to the opinion of the Author of the elegant commentaries on the two Epistles of Horace to the Pisos and to Augustus, as expressed in the Dedication to the latter: With the recital of that opinion I shall conclude this long note. “The genius  
“ of Rome was bold and elevated: but Criticism of any kind, was little cultivated, never professed as an *art*, by this people. The specimens we have of  
“ their ability in this way (of which the most elegant, beyond all dispute, are  
“ the two epistles to *Augustus* and the *Pisos*) are *slight occasional attempts*;  
“ made in the negligence of common sense, and adapted to the peculiar exigencies of their own taste and learning; and not by any means the regular  
“ productions



"productions of art, professedly bending itself to this work, and ambitious to give the last finishing to the critical system."

*Translated from Horace.*] In that very entertaining and instructive publication, entitled *An Essay on the Learning and Genius of Pope*, the Critick recommends, as the properest poetical measure to render in English the Satires and Epistles of Horace, that kind of familiar blank verse, used in a version of Terence, attempted some years since by the Author of this translation. I am proud of the compliment; yet I have varied from the mode prescribed: not because Roscommon has already given such a version; or because I think the satyrical hexameters of Horace less familiar than the irregular Iambicks of Terence. English Blank Verse, like the Iambick of Greece and Rome, is peculiarly adapted to theatrical action and dialogue, as well as to the Epick, and the more elevated Didactic Poetry: but after the models left by DRYDEN and POPE, and in the face of the living example of JOHNSON, who shall venture to reject rhyme in the province of Satire and Epistle?

9.—TRUST ME, MY PISOS!] *Credite Pisones!*

Monsieur Dacier, at a very early period, feels the influence of *the personal address*, that governs this Epistle. Remarking on this passage, he observes that Horace, anxious to inspire *the Pisos* with a just taste, says earnestly *Trust me, my Pisos! Credite Pisones!* an expression that betrays fear and distrust, lest *the young Men* should fall into the dangerous error of bad poets, and injudicious criticks, who not only thought the want of unity of subject a pardonable effect of Genius, but even the mark of a rich and luxuriant imagination. And although this Epistle, continues Monsieur Dacier, is addressed indifferently to Piso the father, and his Sons, as appears by v. 24 of the original, yet it is *to the sons in particular* that these precepts are directed; a consideration which reconciles the difference mentioned by Porphyry. *Scribit ad Pisones, viros nobiles disertosque, patrem et filios; vel, ut alii volunt, AD PISONES FRATRES.*

Desprez, the Dauphin Editor, observes also, in the same strain, *Porro scribit Horatius ad patrem et ad filios Pisones, PRÆSERTIM VERO AD HOS.*

The family of *the Pisos*, to whom Horace addresses this Epistle, were called Calpurnii, being descended from Calpus, son of Numa Pompilius, whence he afterwards stiles them *of the Pompilian Blood.* *Pompilius Sanguis!*

10.—THE VOLUME SUCH] *LIBRUM persimilem.* *Liber*, observes Dacier, is a term applied to all literary productions, of whatever description. This

remark is undoubtedly just, confirms the sentiments of *Yafon de Neres*, and takes off the force of all the arguments founded on Quintilian's having stiled this Epistle *LIBER de arte poetica*.

Vossius, speaking of the censure of Scaliger, "*de arte, sine arte*," subjoins *sed fallitur, cum enyppionem putat esse ab Horatio; qui inscripserat EPISTOLAM AD PISONES. Argumentum vero, ut in Epistolarum cæteris, ita in hac etiam, ab aliis postea appositum fuit.*

19.—OFT WORKS OF PROMISE LARGE, AND HIGH ATTEMPT.) *Inceptis gravibus plerumque, &c.* Buckingham's *Essay on Poetry*, Roscommon's *Essay on Translated Verse*, as well as the Satires, and *Art Poétique* of Boileau, and Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, abound with imitations of Horace. This passage of our Author seems to have given birth to the following lines of Buckingham.

'Tis not a flash of fancy, which sometimes,  
Dazzling our minds, sets off the slightest rhimes;  
Bright as a blaze, but in a moment done;  
True Wit is everlasting, like the Sun;  
Which though sometimes behind a cloud retir'd,  
Breaks out again, and is the more admir'd.

The following lines of Pope may perhaps appear to bear a nearer resemblance to this passage of Horace.

Some to Conceit alone their taste confine,  
And glitt'ring thoughts struck out at ev'ry line;  
Pleas'd with a work where nothing's just or fit;  
One glaring chaos, and wild heap of wit.

*Essay on Criticism.*

49.—Of *tb' Æmilian clafs.*] *Æmilium circa ludum*—literally, *near the Æmilian School*; alluding to the Academy of Gladiators of Æmilius Lentulus, in whose neighbourhood lived many Artists and Shopkeepers.

This passage also is imitated by Buckingham.

Number and Rhime, and that harmonious sound,  
Which never does the ear with harshness wound,  
Are necessary, yet but vulgar arts;  
For all in vain these superficial parts



Contribute to the structure of the whole  
Without a *Genius* too; for that's the *Soul*:  
A *Spirit* which inspires the work throughout  
As that of *Nature* moves the world about.

*Essay on Poetry.*

Pope has given a beautiful illustration of this thought.

Survey THE WHOLE, nor seek slight faults to find  
Where nature moves, and rapture warms the mind;  
In wit, as Nature, what affects our hearts,  
Is not th' exactness of peculiar parts;  
'Tis not a lip, or eye, we beauty call,  
But the joint force and full result of all.  
Thus when we view some well-proportion'd dome,  
(The world's just wonder, and ev'n thine, O Rome!)  
No single parts unequally surprise,  
All comes united to th' admiring eyes;  
No monstrous height, or breadth, or length appear;  
THE WHOLE at once is bold and regular.

*Essay on Criticism.*

56.—SELECT, ALL YE WHO WRITE, A SUBJECT FIT] *Sumite materiam, &c.*

This passage is well imitated by Roscommon in his *Essay on Translated Verse*.

The first great work, (a task perform'd by few)  
Is, that *yourself* may to *yourself* be true:  
No mask, no tricks, no favour, no reserve!  
*Dissect* your mind, examine ev'ry *nerve*.  
Whoever vainly on his strength depends,  
*Begins* like Virgil, but like *Mævi*us *ends*.

Each poet with a different talent writes,  
One *praises*, one *instructs*, another *bites*.  
Horace did ne'er aspire to Epick Bays,  
Nor lofty Maro stoop to Lyrick Lays.  
Examine how your *humour* is inclin'd,  
And which the ruling passion of your mind:  
Then, seek a Poet who your way does bend,  
And chuse an Author as you chuse a friend.



United by this sympathetick bond,  
 You grow familiar, intimate, and fond;  
 Your thoughts, your words your stiles, ~~your Souls agree,~~  
 No longer his interpreter, but He.

*Stooping to Lyrick Lays, though not innapplicable to some of the lighter odes of Horace, is not defective of the general character of the Lyrick Muse. Musa dedit Fidibus Divas &c.*

Rope takes up the same thought in his Essay on Criticism.

Be sure yourself and your own reach to know;  
 How far your genius, taste, and learning go;  
 Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet;  
 And mark that point where sense and dulness meet.

Like Kings we lose the conquests gain'd before,  
 By vain ambition still to make them more;  
 Each might his servile province well command,  
 Would all but stoop to what they understand.

71.—*A cunning phrase.] Callida junctura.*

Jason de Nöres and many other interpreters agree that Horace here recommends, after Aristotle, the artful elevation of style by the use of common words in an uncommon sense, producing at once an air of familiarity and magnificence. Some however confine the expression, *callida junctura*, to signify compound words. The Author of the English Commentary adopts the first construction; but considers the precept in both senses, and illustrates each by many beautiful examples from the plays of Shakespeare. These examples he has accompanied with much elegant and judicious observation, as the reader of taste will be convinced by the following short extracts.

“The writers of that time had so latinized the English language, that the pure English Idiom, which Shakespeare generally follows, has all the air of novelty, which other writers are used to affect by foreign phraseology.—In short, the articles here enumerated are

“but

“but so many ways of departing from the usual and simpler forms of speech, without neglecting too much the grace of ease and perspicuity; in which well-tempered licence one of the greatest charms of all poetry, but especially of Shakespeare’s poetry, consists. Not that he was always and every where so happy. His expression sometimes, and by the very means, here exemplified, becomes *hard, obscure, and unnatural*. This is the extreme on the other side. But in general, we may say, that He hath either followed the direction of Horace very ably, or hath hit upon his rule very happily.”

76.—THE STRAIT-LAC'D CETHEGI.] CINCTUTIS *Cetbegis*. Jason de Nores differs, and I think very justly, from those who interpret *Cinctutis* to signify *loose, bare, or naked*—EXERTOS & NUDOS. The plain sense of the radical word *cingo* is directly opposite. The word *cinctutis* is here assumed to express a severity of manners by an allusion to an antique gravity of dress; and the Poet, adds *de Nores*, very happily forms a new word himself, as a vindication and example of the licence he recommends. Cicero numbers M. Corn. Cethegus among the old Roman Orators; and Horace himself again refers to the Cethegi in his Epistle to Florus, and on the subject of the use of words.

*Obscurata diu populo bonus eruit, atque  
Proferet in lucem speciosa vocabula rerum;  
Quæ prisca memorata CATONIBUS atque CETHEGIS,  
Nunc situs informis premit & deserta vetustas;  
Adsciscet nova quæ genitor produxerit usus.*

Mark where a bold expressive phrase appears,  
Bright thro’ the rubbish of some hundred years;  
Command *old words* that long have slept, to wake,  
Words, that wise Bacon, or brave Raleigh spake;  
Or bid *the new* be English, ages hence,  
For Use will father what’s begot by Sense.

POPE.

This brilliant passage of Pope is quoted in this place by the author of the English Commentary, who has also subjoined many excellent remarks on *the revival of old words*, worthy the particular attention of those who cultivate prose as well as poetry, and shewing at large, that “the riches of a language” are actually increased by retaining its old words: and besides, they have



“ often a greater real weight and dignity, than those of a more fashionable cast,  
 “ which succeed to them. This needs no proof to such as are versed in the  
 “ earlier writings of any language.”—“ The growing prevalency of a very dis-  
 “ ferent humour, first caught, as it should seem, from our commerce with  
 “ the French Models, and countenanced by the too scrupulous delicacy of some  
 “ GOOD WRITERS AMONGST OURSELVES, had gone far towards unnerving the  
 “ noblest modern language, and effeminating the public taste.”—“ The rejection  
 “ of old words, as barbarous, and of many modern ones, “ as unpolite,” had  
 “ so exhausted the strength and stores of our language, that it was high time  
 “ for some master-hand to interpose, and send us for supplies to our old poets;  
 “ which there is the highest authority for saying, no one ever despised, but for  
 “ a reason, not very consistent with his credit to avow: *rudem esse omnino in*  
 “ *nostris poetis, aut INERTISSIMÆ NEQUITIÆ est, aut FASTIDI DELICA-*  
 “ *TISSIMI.*—Cic. de fin. l. i. c. 2.

AS WOODS ENDURE, &c.] *Ut silvæ foliis*, &c. Mr. Duncombe, in his trans-  
 lation of our Author, concurs with Monsieur Dacier in observing that “ Horace  
 “ seems here to have had in view that fine similitude of Homer in the sixth  
 “ book of the Iliad, comparing the generations of men to the annual succe-  
 “ sion of leaves.

Οἴσπερ φύλλον γένεθ, τοίνδε κ' ἀνδρῶν.  
 φύλλα τὰ μὲν τ' ἀνέμῳ χαμάδις χεῖν, ἀλλὰ δὲ δ' ὕλην  
 Τυλαδίῳσσι φύει, ἔαρος δ' ἐπιγίγνεται ἄρπ.  
 ὧς ἀνδρῶν γένεθ. ἡμὲν φύει, ἢ δ' ἀπολέγεται.

“ Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,  
 “ Now green in youth, now withering on the ground;  
 “ Another race the following spring supplies,  
 “ They fall successive, and successive rise:  
 “ So generations in their turns decay;  
 “ So flourish these, when those are past away.

The translator of Homer has himself compared words to leaves, but in ano-  
 ther view, in his Essay on Criticism.

Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,  
 Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.



In another part of the Essay he pursues the same train of thought with Horace, and rises, I think, above his Master.

Short is the date, alas, of modern rhymes,  
And 'tis but just to let them live betimes.  
No longer now that golden age appears,  
When Patriarch-wits surviv'd a thousand years:  
Now length of Fame (our second life) is lost,  
And bare threescore is all ev'n that can boast;  
Our sons their father's failing language see,  
And such as Chaucer is, shall Dryden be.  
So when the faithful pencil has design'd  
Some bright idea of the Master's mind,  
Where a new world leaps out at his command,  
And ready Nature waits upon his hand;  
When the ripe colours soften and unite,  
And sweetly melt into just shade and light;  
When mellowing years their full perfection give,  
And each bold figure just begins to live;  
The treach'rous colours the fair art betray,  
And all the bright creation fades away!

*Essay on Criticism.*

95.—WHETHER THE SEA, &c.] *Sive receptus, &c.*

This may be understood of any harbour; but it is generally interpreted to refer to the *Portus Julius*, a haven formed by letting in the sea upon the *Lucrine Lake*, and forming a junction between that and the *Lake Avernus*; a work, commenced by Julius Cæsar, and completed by Augustus, or Agrippa under his auspices. *Regis opus!* Both these lakes (says Martin) were in Campania: the former was destroyed by an earthquake; but the latter is the present *Lago d'Averno*. Strabo, the Geographer, who, as well as our Poet, was living at the time, ascribes this work to Agrippa, and tells us that the *Lucrine bay* was separated from the *Tyrrhene sea* by a mound, said to have been first made by *Hercules*, and restored by *Agrippa*. *Philargyrius* says that a storm arose at the time of the execution of this great work, to which *Virgil* seems to refer in his mention of this Port, in the course of his *Panegyrick on Italy* in the second *Georgick*.

*An*

*An memorem Portus LUCRINÆQUE addita claustra,  
Atque indignatum magnis stridoribus aquor,  
Julia quæ ponto longe sonat unda refluxo,  
Tyrrhenusque fretis immittitur æstus AVERNIS?*

Or shall I praise thy Ports, or mention make  
Of the vast mound, that binds the *Lucrine Lake*?  
Or the disdainful sea, that, shut from thence,  
Roars round the structure, and invades the fence;  
There, where secure the *Julian* waters glide,  
Or where *Avernus*' jaws admit the *Tyrrhen* tide?

DRYDEN.

98.—WHETHER THE MARSH, &c.] *Sterilisve Palus.*

THE PONTINE MARSH, first drained by the Consul Cornelius Cethegus;  
then, by Augustus; and many, many years after by Theodorick.

102.—OR IF THE RIVER, &c.] *Sen cursum, &c.* The course of the  
*Tyber*, changed by Augustus, to prevent inundations.

110.—FOR DEEDS OF KINGS, &c.] *Res gestæ regumque, &c.*

The ingenious author of the English Commentary, to whom I have so often referred, and to whom I must continue to refer, has discovered particular taste, judgement, and address, in his explication of this part of the Epistle. It runs thus.

“ From reflections on poetry, at large, he proceeds now to particulars: the most obvious  
“ of which being the different forms and measures of poetick composition, he considers, in  
“ this view, [from v. 75 to 86] the four great species of poetry, to which all others may be  
“ reduced, the *Epick*, *Elegiack*, *Dramatick*, and *Lyrick*. But the distinction of the mea-  
“ sure, to be observed in the several species is so obvious, that there can scarcely be any  
“ mistake about them. The difficulty is to know [from v. 86 to 89] how far each may  
“ partake of the spirit of the other, without destroying that natural and necessary difference,  
“ which ought to subsist betwixt them all. To explain this, which is a point of great  
“ nicety, he considers [from v. 89 to 99] the case of Dramatick Poetry; the two species  
“ of which are as distinct from each other, as any two can be, and yet there are times,  
“ when the features of the one will be allowed to resemble those of the other.—But the Poet  
“ had a further view in chusing this instance. For he gets by this means into the main of  
“ his subject, which was Dramatick Poetry, and, by the most delicate transition imagin-  
“ able,



"able, proceeds [from 89 to 323] to deliver a series of rules, interspersed with historical accounts, and enlivened by digressions, for the regulation of the ROMAN STAGE."

It is needless to insist, that my hypothesis will not allow me to concur entirely in the latter part of this extract; at least in that latitude, to which the system of the writer carries it: yet I perfectly agree with Mr. Duncombe, that the learned Critick, in his observations on this Epistle, "has shewn, in general, the connection and dependence of one part with another, in a clearer light than any other Commentator." His shrewd and delicate commentary is, indeed, a most elegant contrast to the barbarous analysis of Scaliger, drawn up without the least idea of poetical transition, and with the uncouth air of a mere dry logician, or dull grammarian. I think, however, the *Order and Method*, observed in this Epistle, is stricter than has yet been observed, and that the *series of rules* is delivered with great regularity; NOT *enlivened by digressions*, but passing from one topick to another, by the most natural and easy transitions. The Author's discrimination of the different styles of the several species of poetry, leads him, as has been already shewn, to consider THE DICTION of the Drama, and its accommodation to the *circumstances and character* of the Speaker. A recapitulation of these *circumstances* carries him to treat of the due management of *characters already known*, as well as of sustaining those that are entirely *original*; to the first of which the Poet gives the preference, recommending *known CHARACTERS*, as well as *known SUBJECTS*: And on the mention of this joint preference, the Author leaves further consideration of *the DICTION*, and slides into discourse upon *the FABLE*, which he continues down to the 152d verse.

*Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,  
Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet inum.*

Having dispatched *the FABLE*, the Poet proceeds, and with some Solemnity of Order, to the consideration of *the CHARACTERS*; not in regard to *suitable diction*, for of that he has already spoken, but in respect to *the manners*; and, in this branch of his subject, he has as judiciously borrowed from *the Rhetoricks* of Aristotle, as in the rest of his Epistle from the *Poeticks*. He then directs, in its due place, the proper conduct of particular *INCIDENTS of the fable*; after which he treats of *the CHORUS*; from whence he naturally falls into the *history* of theatrical music; which is, as naturally, succeeded by an account of the Origin of *the Drama* itself, which the Poet commences, like  
his



his master Aristotle, even from the Dithyrambick Song, and carries it down to the establishment of the New Greek Comedy; from whence he passes easily and gracefully, to the ROMAN STAGE, acknowledging the merits of the Writers, but pointing out their defects, and assigning the causes. He then subjoins a few general observations, and concludes his long discourse on the DRAMA, having extended it to 275 lines. This discourse, together with the result of all his reflections on Poets and Poetry, he then applies in the most earnest and *personal* manner to the ELDER PISO; and with a long and most pathetick *peroration*, if I may adopt an oratorical term, concludes the Epistle.

116.—THE ELEGY'S SMALL SONG.] *EXIGUOS Elegos.*

Commentators differ concerning the import of this expression—*EXIGUOS Elegos*; *the Elegy's small song*. De Nöres, Schrevelius, and Desprez, think it refers to the humility of the elegiack stile and subjects, compared with epick or lyrick sublimity. Monsieur Dacier rather thinks that Horace refers here, as in the words *Versibus impariter junctis*, “Couplets unequal,” to the use of the pentameter, or short verse, consisting of five feet, and joined to the hexameter, or long verse, of six. This inequality of the couplet Monsieur Dacier justly prefers to the two long Alexandrines of his own country, which sets almost all the French poetry, Epick, Dramatick, Elegiack, or Satyrick, to the tune of *Derry Down*. In our language, the measures are more various, and more happily conceived. Our Elegy adopts not only *unequal couplets*, but *alternate rhymes*, which give a plaintive tone to the heroick measure, and are most happily used in Gray's beautiful *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*.

135.—THY FEAST, THYESTES!] *Cana Thyeste.*

The story of Thyestes being of the most tragick nature, a banquet on his own children! is commonly interpreted by the Criticks, as mentioned by Horace, in allusion to Tragedy in general. The Author of the English Commentary, however, is of a different opinion, supposing, from a passage of Cicero, that the Poet means to glance at the *Thyestes* of *Ennius*, and to pay an oblique compliment to *Varius*, who had written a tragedy on the same subject.

The same learned Critick also takes it for granted, that the Tragedy of *Telephus*, and probably of *Peleus*, aftermentioned, point at tragedies of Euripides,

Euripides, on these subjects, translated into Latin, and accommodated to the Roman Stage, without success, by *Ennius*, *Accius*, or *Nævius*.

One of this Critick's notes on this part of the Epistle, treating on the use of *pure poetry* in the Drama, abounds with curious disquisition and refined criticism.

150.—*They must have PASSION too.*] *DULCIA sunt.* The Poet, with great address, includes THE SENTIMENTS under the consideration of DICATION.

—*Effert animi motus INTERPRETE LINGUA.*  
Forces expression from the FAITHFUL TONGUE.

Buckingham has treated the subject of Dialogue very happily in his Essay on Poetry, glancing, but not servilely, at this part of Horace.

*Figures of Speech*, which Poets think so fine,  
Art's needless varnish to make Nature shine,  
Are all but *Paint* upon a beauteous face,  
And in *Descriptions* only claim a place.  
But to make *Rage* declaim, and *Grief* discourse,  
From lovers in despair *fine* things to *force*,  
Must needs succeed; for who can chuse but pity  
A dying hero miserably witty?

201.—BE NOT YOUR OPENING FIERCE!] *Nec sic incipies.* Most of the Criticks observe, that all these documents, deduced from the *Epick*, are intended, like the reduction of the *Iliad* into acts, as directions and admonitions to the *Dramatick* writer. *Nam si in EPOPEIA, quæ gravitate omnia poematum generæ præcellit, ait principium lene esse debere; quanto magis in TRAGOEDIA et COMOEDIA, idem videri debet?* says de Nores. *Præceptum de initio grandiori evitando, quod tam EPICUS quam TRAGICUS cavere debet;* says the Dauphin Editor. *Il faut se souvenir qu' Horace applique à la Tragedie les règles du Poème Epique. Car si ces debuts éclatans sont ridicules dans la Poème Epique, ils le sont encore plus dans la Tragedie:* says Dacier. The Author of the English Commentary makes the like observation, and uses it to enforce his system of the Epistle's being intended as a Criticism on the Roman Drama.



202.—*Like the rude BALLAD-MONGER'S chant of old.] Ut Scriptor CYCLICUS olim.] Scriptor CYCLICUS signifies an itinerant Rhymers travelling, like Shakespeare's Mad Tom, to wakes, and fairs, and market-towns. 'Tis not precisely known who was the Cyclick Poet here meant. Some have ascribed the character to Mævius, and Roscommon has adopted that idea.*

Whoever vainly on his *strength* depends,  
Begins like VIRGIL, but like MÆVIUS ends:  
That Wretch, in spite of his forgotten rhimes,  
Condemn'd to live to all succeeding times,  
With *pompous nonsense*, and a *bellowing sound*,  
Sung *lofty Ilium*, tumbling to the ground.  
And, if my Muse can thro' past ages see,  
That *noisy, nauseous, Gaping Fool* was he;  
Exploded, when, with universal scorn,  
The *Mountains labour'd*, and a *Mouse* was born.

*Essay on Translated Verse.*

The pompous exordium of Statius is well known, and the fragments of Ennius present us a most tremendous commencement of his Annals.

HORRIDA ROMULEUM CERTAMINA PANGO DUELLUM!

this is indeed

to split our ears asunder

With guns, drums, trumpets, blunderbuss, and thunder!

211.—*Say, Muse, the Man, &c.] Homer's opening of the Odyssey. This rule is perhaps no where so chastely observed as in the Paradise Lost. Homer's Μῆνιν ἀειδὲ θεῶν! or, his Ἀνδρά μοι εὐνέτε, Μῦσα! or, Virgil's Arma, virumque cano! are all boisterous and vehement, in comparison with the calmness and modesty of Milton's meek approach,*

Of Man's first disobedience, &c.

215.—*Antiphates, the Cyclops, &c.] Antiphatem, Scyllamque, & cum Cyclope Charybdim. Stories, that occur in the Odyssey.*

218-19—*Diomed's*



218-19—*Diomed's return—the Double Egg.*

The return of Diomedé is not mentioned by Homer, but is said to be the subject of a tedious Poem by Antimachus; and to Stasimus is ascribed a Poem, called *the Little Iliad*, beginning with the nativity of Helen.

227.—*Hear now!* Tu, quid ego, &c.

This invocation, says Dacier justly, is not addressed to either of the Pisos, but to the Dramatick Writer generally.

229.—*The Cloth GOES DOWN.*] *Aulea manentis.* This is translated according to modern manners; for with the Antients, the Cloth was *raised* at the Conclusion of the Play. Thus in Virgil's *Georgicks*;

*Vel scena ut versis discedat frontibus, atque  
Purpurea intexti TOLLANT AULÆA Britanni.*

Where the proud theatres disclose the scene;

Which interwoven Britons seem to raise,

And shew the triumph which their shame displays.

DRYDEN.

230.—*Man's several ages, &c.*] *Ætatis cujusque, &c.* Jason Demores takes notice of the particular stress, that Horace lays on the due discrimination of the several *Ages*, by the solemnity with which he introduces the mention of them: The same Critick subjoins a note also, which I shall transcribe, as it serves to illustrate a popular passage in the *As you Like It* of Shakespeare.

All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women merely players;

They have their *exits* and their entrances,

And one man in his time plays many parts:

His acts being SEVEN AGES. At first the infant,

Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms:

And then, the whining school-boy with his satchel,

And shining morning-face, creeping like snail

Unwillingly to school. And then, the lover;

Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad

Made to his mistress' eye-brow. Then, a soldier;

Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,

Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel;

Seeking the bubble reputation  
 Even in the cannon's mouth. And then, the justice  
 In fair round belly, with good capon lin'd,  
 With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,  
 Full of wise saws and modern instances,  
 And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts  
 Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,  
 With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side;  
 His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide  
 For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,  
 Turning again toward childish treble, pipes,  
 And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,  
 That ends this strange eventful history,  
 Is second childishness, and mere oblivion,  
 Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing.

*Animadverti a PLERISQUE hominis aetatem IN SEPTEM DIVISAM ESSE PARTES, INFANTIAM, PUERITIAM, ADOLESCENTIAM, JUVENTUTEM, VIRILITATEM, SENECTUTEM, & ut ab illis dicitur, DECREPITATEM. In hac verò parte nihil de INFANTIAE moribus Horatius, cum nihil ea aetas præter vagitum habeat proprium, idèdque infantis persona minimè in scenâ induci possit, quòd ipsas rerum voces reddere neque dum sciat, neque valeat. Nihil de moribus item bujus ætatis, quam, si latine licet, DECREPITATEM vocabimus, QUÆ ÆTAS QUODAMMODO INFANTIAE RESPONDET: de JUVENTUTE autem & ADOLESCENTIA simul pertractat, quòd et studiis, et naturâ, & voluntate, param, aut nihil inter se differant. Aristoteles etiam in libris ad Theodectem omisit & PUERITIAM, & merito: cum minime apud pueros, vel de pueris sit orator habiturus orationem. Ille enim ad hoc ex ætate personarum differentiam adhibet, ut instituat oratorem, quomodo moratâ uti debeat oratione, id est, eorum moribus, apud quos, & de quibus loquitur, accommodatâ.*

It appears from hence, that it was common for the writers of that time, as well as Shakespeare's Jaques, to divide the life of Man into SEVEN AGES, viz. Infancy, Childhood, Puberty, Youth, Manhood, Old Age, and Decrepitude; "which last, (says Denores) in some sort answers to Infancy," or, as Shakespeare expresses it, IS SECOND CHILDISHNESS.

"Before Shakespeare's time, says Warburton, seven acts was no unusual division of a play, so that there is a greater beauty than appears at first sight in this  
 "image."

"image." Mr. Steevens, however, informs us that the plays of that early period were not divided into acts at all. It is most probable therefore that Shakespeare only copied the moral philosophy (the *Socratica charta*) of his own day, adapting it, like Aristotle and Horace, to his own purpose; and, I think, with more felicity, than either of his illustrious predecessors, by contriving to introduce, and discriminate, *every one of THE SEVEN AGES*. This he has effected by assigning STATION and CHARACTER to some of the stages, which to Aristotle and Horace appeared too similar to be distinguished from each other. Thus PUBERTY, YOUTH, MANHOOD, and OLD AGE, become under Shakespeare's hand, *the LOVER, the SOLDIER, the JUSTICE*, and the lean and slipper'd PANTALOOON; while the *natural qualities* of the INFANT, the BOY, and the DOTARD, afford sufficient materials for poetical description.

262.—*Thus YEARS ADVANCING many comforts bring,  
And FLYING bear off many on their wing.*

*Multa ferunt ANNI VENIENTES commoda secum,  
Multa RECEDENTES adimunt.*

Aristotle considers the powers of the body in a state of advancement till the 35th year, and the faculties of the mind progressively improving till the 49th; from which periods they severally decline. On which circumstance, applied to this passage of Horace, Jason de Nores elegantly remarks, *Vita enim nostra videtur ad VIRILITATEM usque, quâ IN STATU posita est, QUENDAM QUASI PONTEM ætatis ASCENDERE, ab eâque inde DESCENDERE*. Whether Addison ever met with the commentary of De Nores, it is perhaps impossible to discover. But this idea of *the ASCENT and DECLIVITY of the BRIDGE of HUMAN LIFE*, strongly reminds us of the delightful *Vision of MIRZA*.

288.—*An actor's part THE CHORUS should sustain.] Actoris partes CHORUS, &c.*

" See also Aristotle [*πρῶτον. κ. ιν.*] The judgment of two such critics, and the practice of wise antiquity, concurring to establish this precept concerning the Chorus, it should  
" thenceforth, one would think, have become a fundamental rule and maxim of the stage.



“ And so indeed it appeared to some few writers. The most admired of the French tra-  
 “ gic poets ventured to introduce it into two of his latter plays, and with such success,  
 “ that, as one observes, *It should, in all reason, have disabused his countrymen on this head:*  
 “ *l'essai heureux de M. Racine, qui les [chœurs] a fait revivre dans ATHALIE et dans EST-*  
 “ *HER, devoit, il semble, nous avoir detrompez sur cet article.* [P. Brumoi, vol. i. p. 105.]  
 “ And, before him, our *Milton*, who, with his other great talents, possessed a supreme know-  
 “ ledge of antiquity, was so struck with its use and beauty, as to attempt to bring it into  
 “ our language. His *Sampson Agonistes* was, as might be expected, a master-piece. But  
 “ even his credit hath not been sufficient to restore the Chorus. Hear a late Professor of the  
 “ art declaring, *De CHORO nihil differui, quia non est essentialis dramati, atque à neotericis pe-*  
 “ *nitus, ET, ME JUDICE, MERITO REPUDIATUR.* [Præl. Poet. vol. ii. p. 188.] Whence  
 “ it hath come to pass that the chorus hath been thus neglected is not now the enquiry. But  
 “ that this critic, and all such, are greatly out in their judgments, when they presume to  
 “ censure it in the ancients, must appear (if we look no further) from the double use, in-  
 “ fisted on by the poet, For, 1. A chorus interposing, and bearing a part in the progress of  
 “ the action, gives the representation that *probability* [\*], and striking resemblance of real  
 “ life, which every man of sense perceives, and *feels* the want of upon our stage; a want,  
 “ which nothing but such an expedient as the chorus can possibly relieve. And, 2. The  
 “ importance of its other office [l. 196] to the *utility* of the representation, is so great, that,  
 “ in a moral view, nothing can compensate for this deficiency. For it is necessary to the  
 “ truth and decorum of characters, that the *manners*, bad as well as good, be drawn in  
 “ strong, vivid colours; and to that end that immoral sentiments, forcibly expressed and  
 “ speciously maintained, be sometimes *imputed* to the speakers. Hence the sound philosophy  
 “ of the chorus will be constantly wanting, to rectify the wrong conclusions of the audi-  
 “ ence, and prevent the ill impressions that might otherwise be made upon it. Nor let any  
 “ one say, that the audience is well able to do this for itself: Euripides did not find even  
 “ an Athenian theatre so quick-sighted. The story is well known, [Sen. Ep. 115.] that when  
 “ this painter of the *manners* was obliged, by the rules of his art, and the character to be  
 “ sustained, to put a run of bold sentiments in the mouth of one of his persons, the people  
 “ instantly took fire, charging the poet with the *imputed* villainy, as though it had been his  
 “ *own*. Now if such an audience could so easily misinterpret an attention to the truth of  
 “ character into the real doctrine of the poet, and this too, when a Chorus was at hand to  
 “ correct and disabuse their judgments, what must be the case, when the *whole* is left to  
 “ the sagacity and penetration of the people? The wiser sort, it is true, have little need  
 “ of this information. Yet the reflexions of sober sense on the course and occurrences

\* Quel avantage ne peut il [le poete] pas tirer d'une troupe d'acteurs, qui remplissent sa scene, qui rendent plus sen-  
 sible la continuité de l'action, et qui la font paroître VRAISEMBLABLE, puisqu'il n'est pas naturel qu'elle se passe sans  
 semoins. On ne sent que trop le vuide de notre Théatre sans chœurs. &c. [Les Théatre des Grecs, vol. i. p. 105.]

“ of the representation, clothed in the noblest dress of poetry, and enforced by the joint powers of *harmony* and *action* (which is the true character of the Chorus) might make it, even to such, a no unpleasant or unprofitable entertainment. But these *two* are a small part of the *uses* of the chorus; which in every light is seen so important to the truth, decorum, and dignity of the tragic scene, that the *modern* stage, which hath not thought proper to adopt it, is even, with the advantage of, sometimes, the justest moral painting and sublimest imagery, but a very faint shadow of the *old*; as must needs appear to those who have looked into the ancient models, or, divesting themselves of modern prejudices, are disposed to consult the dictates of plain sense. For the use of such, I once designed to have drawn into one view the several important benefits arising to the drama from the observance of this rule, but have the pleasure to find myself prevented by a sensible dissertation of a good French writer, which the reader will find in the *VIII tom. of the History of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres*.—Or, it may be sufficient to refer the English reader to the late tragedies of *ELFRIDA* and *CARACTACUS*; which do honour to modern poetry, and are a better apology, than any I could make, for the ancient Chorus.——*Notes on the Art of Poetry.*

Though it is not my intention to agitate, in this place, the long disputed question concerning the expediency, or in expediency, of the CHORUS; yet I cannot dismiss the above note without some farther observation. In the first place then I cannot think that *the judgment of two such Criticks* as Aristotle and Horace, can be decisively quoted, as *concurring with the practice of wise antiquity*, TO ESTABLISH THE CHORUS. Neither of these *two Criticks* have taken up the question, each of them giving directions for the proper conduct of the CHORUS, considered as an established and received part of Tragedy, and indeed originally, as they both tell us, *the whole* of it. Aristotle, in his Poeticks, has not said much on the subject; and from the little he has said, more arguments might perhaps be drawn, in favour of the omission, than for the introduction of the CHORUS. It is true that he says, in his 4th chapter, that “ Tragedy, after many changes, paused, *having gained its natural form*: “πολλὰς μεταβολὰς μεταβαλόντα ἡ τραγωδία ἐπαύσατο, ἐπεὶ ἔσχε τὴν ἐαυτῆς φύσιν. This might, at first sight, seem to include his approbation of the CHORUS, as well as of all the other parts of Tragedy then in use: but he himself expressly tells us in the *very same chapter*, that he had no such meaning, saying, that “ to enquire whether Tragedy be perfect in its parts, either considered in itself, or with  
“ relation

“ relation to the theatre, was foreign to his present purpose.” Τὸ μὲν οὖν ἐπισκοπεῖν, εἰ ἄρα ἔχει ἡδὴ ἡ τραγωδία τοῖς ἱκανῶς, ἢ οὐ, αὐτὸ τε καὶ αὐτὸ κρινόμενον, καὶ πρὸς τὰ θεάτρα, ἄλλος λόγος. In the passage from which Horace has, in the verses now before us, described the office, and laid down the duties of the CHORUS, the passage referred to by the learned Critick, the words of Aristotle are not particularly favourable to the institution, or much calculated to recommend the use of it. For Aristotle there informs us, “ that Sophocles alone “ of all the Grecian writers, made *the* CHORUS conducive to the progress of “ the fable: not only even Euripides being culpable in this instance; but “ other writers, after the example of Agathon, introducing Odes as little to “ the purpose, as if they had borrowed whole scenes from another play.” Καὶ τὴν χορὸν δὲ ἓνα δεῖ ὑπολαβεῖν τῶν ὑποκριτῶν. Καὶ μόνον εἶναι τῷ ὄλῳ, καὶ συναγωνίζεσθαι μὴ ὥσπερ παρ’ Εὐριπίδῃ, ἀλλ’ ὥσπερ παρὰ Σοφοκλεῖ. Τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς τὰ διδόμενα μᾶλλον τῷ μῦθῳ, ἢ ἄλλῃς τραγωδίας ἐστὶ· δι’ ὃ ἐμβόλημα ἄδουσιν, πρῶτον ἀρχαῖος Ἀγράδωνος τῷ ταύτῳ. Καὶ τοὶ τὴν διάφρεσιν, ἢ ἐμβόλημα ἄδουσιν, ἢ ῥῆσιν ἐξ ἄλλων εἰς ἄλλο ἀρμύσσειν, ἢ ἐπεισώδιον ὄρου; [περ. ποιητ. κ. ιι.]

On the whole therefore, whatever may be the merits, or advantages of *the* CHORUS, I cannot think that the judgment of Aristotle or Horace can be adduced in recommendation of it. As to *the* PROBABILITY given to the representation, by *the* CHORUS *interposing and bearing a part in the action*; the Publick, who have lately seen a troop of singers assembled on the stage, as a CHORUS, during the whole representations of *ELFRIDA* and *CARACTACUS*, are competent to decide for themselves, how far such an expedient, gives a more *striking resemblance of human life*, than the common usage of our Drama. As to its importance in a *moral* view, to correct the evil impression of vicious sentiments, *imputed to the speakers*; the story told, to enforce its use for this purpose, conveys a proof of its inefficacy. To give due force to sentiments, as well as to direct their proper tendency, depends on the skill and address of the Poet, independent of *the* CHORUS.

Monsieur Dacier, as well as the author of the above note, censures the modern stage for having rejected *the* CHORUS, and having lost thereby *at least half its probability, and its GREATEST ORNAMENT*; so that our Tragedy is *but a very faint shadow of the old*. Learned Criticks, however, do not, perhaps, consider, that if it be expedient to revive *the* CHORUS, all the other parts of the *Ancient Tragedy* must be revived along with it. Aristotle mentions *Musick*



as one of the six parts of Tragedy, and Horace no sooner introduces *the* CHORUS, but he proceeds to *the* PIPE and LYRE. If a CHORUS be really necessary, our Dramas, like those of the antients, should be rendered wholly *musical*; the *Dancers* also will then claim their place, and the pretensions of Vestris and Noverre must be admitted as *classical*. Such a spectacle, if not more *natural* than the modern, would at least be consistent; but to introduce a groupe of *spectatorial actors*, SPEAKING in one part of the Drama, and SINGING in another, is as strange and incoherent a medley, and full as *unclassical*, as the dialogue and airs of *the* BEGGAR'S OPERA!

290.—*Chaunting no Odes between the acts, that seem*

UNAPT, or FOREIGN to the GENERAL THEME.

*Nec quid medios, &c.*

On this passage the author of the English Commentary thus remarks: "How necessary this advice might be to the writers of the Augustan age cannot certainly appear; but, if the practice of Seneca may give room for suspicion, it should seem to have been much wanted; in whom I scarcely believe *there* is ONE SINGLE INSTANCE, of *the* CHORUS being employed in a manner, consonant to its true end and character."

The learned Critick seems here to believe, and the plays under the name of Seneca in some measure warrant the conclusion, that *the* CHORUS of the Roman Stage was not calculated to answer the ends of its institution. Aristotle has told us just the same thing, with an exception in favour of Sophocles, of the Grecian Drama. And are such surmises, or such information, likely to strengthen our prejudices on behalf of *the* CHORUS, or to inflame our desires for its revival?

292.—LET IT TO VIRTUE PROVE A GUIDE AND FRIEND.

*Ille bonis faveatque, &c.*

"The Chorus," says the poet, *is to take the side of the good and virtuous*, i. e. is always to sustain a moral character. But this will need some explanation and restriction. To conceive aright of its office, we must suppose the *Chorus* to be a number of persons, by some probable cause assembled together, as witnesses and spectators of the great action of the drama. Such persons, as they cannot be wholly uninterested in what passes before them, will very naturally bear some share in the representation. This will principally consist in

P

"declaring

“ declaring their sentiments, and indulging their reflexions freely on the several events and  
 “ distresses as they shall arise. Thus we see the *moral*, attributed to the Chorus, will be no  
 “ other than the dictates of plain sense, such as must be obvious to every thinking observer  
 “ of the action, who is under the influence of no peculiar partialities from *affection* or  
 “ *interest*. Though even these may be supposed in cases, where the character, towards which  
 “ they *draw*, is represented as virtuous.

“ A Chorus, thus constituted, must always, it is evident, take the part of virtue; because  
 “ this is the natural and almost necessary determination of mankind, in all ages and nations,  
 “ when acting freely and unconstrained.”

*Notes on the Art of Poetry.*

297.—FAITHFUL AND SECRET.—*Ille tegat commissa.*

On this *nice part* of the duty of the CHORUS the author of the English Commentary thus remarks.

“ This important advice is not always easy to be followed. Much indeed will depend on  
 “ the choice of the subject, and the artful constitution of the fable. Yet, with all his care,  
 “ the ablest writer will sometimes find himself embarrassed by the CHORUS. I would here be  
 “ understood to speak chiefly of the moderns. For the ancients, though it has not been at-  
 “ tended to, had some peculiar advantages over us in this respect, resulting from the prin-  
 “ ciples and practices of those times. For, as it hath been observed of the ancient epic  
 “ muse, that she borrowed much of her state and dignity from the false *theology* of the pagan  
 “ world, so, I think, it may be justly said of the ancient tragic, that she has derived great  
 “ advantages of probability from its mistaken *moral*. If there be truth in this reflection, it  
 “ will help to justify some of the ancient choirs, that have been most objected to by the  
 “ moderns.

After two examples from Euripides; in one of which the trusty CHORUS conceals the premeditated *suicide* of Phædra; and in the other abets Medea's intended *murder of her children*; both which are most ably vindicated by the Critick; the note concludes in these words.

“ In sum, though these acts of severe avenging justice might not be according to the express  
 “ letter of the laws, or the more refined conclusions of the PORCH or ACADEMY; yet there is  
 “ no doubt, that they were, in the general account, esteemed fit and reasonable. And, it is to  
 “ be observed, in order to pass a right judgment on the ancient Chorus, that, though in virtue of  
 “ their office, they were obliged universally to sustain a moral character; yet this moral was  
 “ rather political and popular, than strictly legal or philosophic. Which is also founded on  
 “ good reason. The scope and end of the ancient theatre being to serve the interests of virtue  
 “ and

“ and society, on the principles and sentiments, already spread and admitted amongst the people,  
 “ and not to correct old errors, and instruct them in philosophic truth.”

One of the censurers of Euripides, whose opinion is controverted in the above note, is Monsieur Dacier ; who condemns *the CHORUS* in this instance, as not only violating their *moral* office, but *transgressing the laws of NATURE and of GOD, by a fidelity, so VICIOUS and CRIMINAL, that these women, [the CHORUS !] ought to fly away in the Car of Medea, to escape the punishment due to them.* The Annotator above, agrees with the Greek Scholiast, that *the Corinthian women (the CHORUS) being free*, properly desert the interests of Creon, and keep Medea's secrets, *for the sake of justice*, according to their custom. Dacier, however, urges an instance of their *infidelity* in the *ION* of Euripides, where they betray the secret of Xuthus to Creusa, which the French Critick defends on account of their attachment to their mistress ; and adds, that the rule of Horace, like other rules, is proved by the exception. “ Besides (continues the Critick in the true spirit of French gallantry) should “ we so heavily accuse the Poet for not having made *an assembly of women* “ *KEEP A SECRET ?*” *D'ailleurs, peut on faire un si grand crime à un poete, de n'avoir pas fait en sorte qu'une troupe de femmes garde un secret ?* He then concludes his note with blaming Euripides for the perfidy of Iphigenia at Tauris, who abandons these faithful guardians of her secret, by flying alone with Orestes, and leaving them to the fury of Thoas, to which they must have been exposed, but for the intervention of Minerva.

On the whole, it appears that the *moral importance* of *the CHORUS* must be considered *with some limitations* : or, at least, that *the CHORUS* is as liable to be misused and misapplied, as any part of modern Tragedy.

300.—*The PIPE of old.*—*Tibi, non ut nunc, &c.*

“ This, says the author of the English Commentary, is one of those many passages in “ the epistle, about which the critics have said a great deal, without explaining any thing.  
 “ In support of what I mean to offer, as the true interpretation, I observe,

“ That the poet's intention certainly was not to censure the *false* refinements of their “ stage-music ; but, in a short digressive history (such as the didactic form will sometimes “ require) to describe the rise and progress of the *true*. This I collect, 1. From *the expression* “ *itself* ; which cannot, without violence, be understood in any other way. For, as, to the “ words *licentia* and *præcepta*, which have occasioned much of the difficulty, the *first* means a



“ *freer use*; not a *licentiousness*, properly so called; and the *other* only expresses a vehemence and  
 “ rapidity of language, naturally productive of a quicker elocution, such as must of course  
 “ attend the more numerous harmony of the lyre:—not, as M. Dacier translates it, *une*  
 “ *eloquence teméraire et outrée*, an extravagant straining and affectation of style. 2. From  
 “ *the reason of the thing*; which makes it incredible, that the music of the theatre should then  
 “ be most complete, when the times were barbarous, and entertainments of this kind little  
 “ encouraged or understood. 3. From *the character of that music itself*; for the rudeness  
 “ of which, Horace, in effect, apologizes in defending it only on the score of the imperfect  
 “ state of the stage, and the simplicity of its judges.

The above interpretation of this part of the Epistle is, in my opinion, extremely just, and exactly corresponds with the explication of De Nores, who censures Madius for an error similar to that of Dacier. *Non rectè sentire videtur Madius, dum putat potius IN ROMANORUM LUXURIAM inveltum Horatium, quam DE MELODIÆ INCREMENTO tractasse.*

THE MUSICK, having always been a necessary appendage to the CHORUS, I cannot (as has already been hinted in the note on l. 100 of this version) consider the Poet's notice of the Pipe and Lyre, as a *digression*, notwithstanding it includes a short history of the rude simplicity of the Musick in the earlier ages of Rome, and of its subsequent improvements. The CHORUS too, being originally *the whole*, as well as afterwards a legitimate *part* of Tragedy, the Poet naturally traces the Drama from its origin to its most perfect state in Greece; and afterwards compares its progress and improvements with the Theatre of his own country. Such is, I think, the natural and easy *method* pursued by Horace; though it differs in some measure from the *order* and *connection* pointed out by the author of the English Commentary.

314.—For what, alas! could the unpractis'd ear  
 Of rusticks revelling o'er country cheer,  
 A motley groupe; high, low; and froth, and scum,  
 Distinguish but shrill squeak, and dronish hum?  
 —*Indotus quid enim saperet, liberque laborum,*  
*Rusticus urbano confusus, turpis honesto?*

These lines, rather breaking in upon the continuity of the history of theatrical musick, create some obscurity, which has given birth to various interpretations. The author of the English Commentary, who always endeavours to dive to the very bottom of his subject, understands this couplet of Horace as a *sneer* on

those grave philosophers, who considered these *refinements* of the musick as *corruptions*. He interprets the passage at large, and explains the above two lines in these words. "Nor let it be objected than this *freer harmony* was "itself an abuse, a corruption of the severe and *moral* musick of antient times. "Alas! we were not as yet so *wise*, to see the inconveniences of this improvement. And how should we, considering the nature and end of these "theatrical entertainments, and the sort of men of which our theatres were "made up?"

This interpretation is ingenious; but Jason De Nores gives, I think, a more easy and unforced explanation of this difficult passage, by supposing it to refer (by way of *parenthesis*) to what had just been said of the original rude simplicity of the Roman theatrical musick, which, says the Poet, was at least as polished and refined as the taste of the audience. This De Nores urges in two several notes, both which I shall submit to the reader, leaving it to him to determine how far I am to be justified in having adapted my version to his interpretation.

The first of these notes contains at large his reproof of Madius for having, like Dacier, supposed the Poet to censure the improvements that he manifestly meant to commend.

*Quare non rectè videtur sentire Madius, dum putat potius in Romanorum luxuriam inveltum Horatium, quàm de melodiæ incremento tractasse, cum SEIPSUM INTERPRETANS, quid sibi voluerit per hæc, luce clarius, ostendat,*

Tibia non ut nunc orichalco vineta, tubæque Æmula. Et,

Sic prisæ motumque, & luxuriam addidit arti

Tibicen, traxitque vagus per pulpita vestem:

Sic etiam fidibus voces crevere severis,

Et tulit eloquium insolitum facundia præceps.

*Ad quid enim tam longâ digressione extra rem propositam in Romanos inveberetur, eùm de iis nihil aliud dicat, quàm eos genio ac voluptatibus indulgere: cum potius VETERES ROMANOS INSIMULARE VIDEATUR IGNORANTIÆ, QUOD IGNORAVERTINT SONI ET MUSICES VENUSTATEM ET JUCUNDITATEM, ILLA PRIORI SCHLACET INCONDITA ET RUDI ADMODUM CONTENTI, dum ait;*

Indoctus,

Indoctus quid enim saperet, liberque laborum,  
Rusticus urbano confusus, turpis honesto?

The other note is expressly applied by way of comment on this passage itself.

INDOCTUS QUIDENIM SAPERET?]  
*Reddit rationem QUASI PER DIGRESSIONEM, occurrens tacitæ objectioni, QUARE ANTEA APUD ROMANOS MUSICA MELODIA PARVA AUT NULLA PENE FUERAT: QUIA, inquit, INDOCTI IGNARIQUE RERUM OMNIUM VETERES ILLI NONDUM POTERANT JUDICARE DE MELODIA, utpote apud eos re novâ, atque inusitatâ, neque illius jucunditatem degustare, QUIBUS VERBIS IMPERITIAM EORUM, RUSTICITATEMQUE DEMONSTRAT.*

Upon the whole De Nores appears to me to have given the true sense of the passage. I am no friend to licentious transpositions, or arbitrary variations, of an author's text; yet I confess, I was strongly tempted, in order to elucidate this perplexed passage, to have carried these two lines of Horace four lines back, and to have inserted them immediately after the 207th verse.

*Et frugi, castus, verecundusque coibat.*

The English reader, who wishes to try the experiment, is desired to read the four lines, that compose my version, immediately after the 307th line,

*With modest mirth indulg'd their sober taste.*

318.—THE PIPER, grown luxuriant in his art.

320.—Now too, its powers increas'd, THE LYRE SEVERE.

*Sic prisca—arti.*

TIBICEN, &c.

SIC FIDIBUS, &c.

“ This is the application of what hath been said, in general, concerning the refinement of  
“ theatrical music to the case of *tragedy*. Some commentators say, and to *comedy*. But  
“ in this they mistake, as will appear presently. M. Dacier hath I know not what conceit  
“ about a comparison betwixt the *Roman* and *Greek* stage. His reason is, *that the lyre was*  
“ *used in the Greek chorus, as appears, he says, from Sophocles himself playing upon this*  
“ *instrument himself in one of his tragedies.* And was it not used too in the *Roman* chorus,  
“ as appears from Nero's playing upon it in several tragedies? But the learned critic did  
“ not



" not apprehend this matter. Indeed from the caution, with which his guides, the dealers  
 " in antiquities, always touch this point, it should seem, that they too had no very clear con-  
 " ceptions of it. The case I take to have been this: The *tibia*, as being most proper to ac-  
 " company the declamation of the acts, *cantanti succinere*, was constantly employed, as well  
 " in the Roman tragedy as comedy. This appears from many authorities. I mention only  
 " two from Cicero. *Quam multa* [Acad. l. ii. 7.] *quæ nos fugiunt in cantu, exaudiunt in*  
 " *eo genere exercitati: Qui, primo inflatu Tibicinis, Antiopam esse aiunt aut Andromacham,*  
 " *cum nos ne suspicemur quidem.* The other is still more express. In his piece entitled *Ora-*  
 " *tor*, speaking of the negligence of the Roman writers, in respect of numbers, he observes,  
 " that there were even many passages in their tragedies, which, unless the *TIBIA* played to them,  
 " could not be distinguished from mere prose: *quæ, nisi cum Tibicen accesserit, orationi sint so-*  
 " *lutæ simillima.* One of these passages is expressly quoted from *Thyestes*, a tragedy of *En-*  
 " *nius*; and, as appears from the measure, taken out of one of the acts. It is clear then,  
 " that the *tibia* was certainly used in the declamation of tragedy. But now the song of the  
 " tragic chorus, being of the nature of the ode, of course required *fides*, the lyre, the pecu-  
 " liar and appropriated instrument of the lyric muse. And this is clearly collected, if not  
 " from express testimonies; yet from some occasional hints dropt by the antients: For, 1.  
 " the lyre, we are told, [Cic. De Leg. ii. 9. & 15.] and is agreed on all hands, was an  
 " instrument of the Roman theatre; but it was not employed in comedy. This we certainly  
 " know from the short accounts of the music prefixed to Terence's plays. 2. Further,  
 " the *tibicen*, as we saw, accompanied the declamation of the acts in tragedy. It remains  
 " then, that the proper place of the lyre was, where one should naturally look for it, in  
 " the songs of the chorus; but we need not go further than this very passage for a proof. It  
 " is unquestionable, that the poet is here speaking of the chorus only; the following lines  
 " not admitting any other possible interpretation. By *fidibus* then is necessarily understood  
 " the instrument peculiarly used in it. Not that it need be said that the *tibia* was never  
 " used in the chorus. The contrary seems expressed in a passage of Seneca, [Ep. lxxxiv.]  
 " and in Julius Pollux [l. iv. 15. § 107.]. It is sufficient, if the *lyre* was used solely, or  
 " principally, in it at this time. In this view, the whole digression is more pertinent, and  
 " connects better. The poet had before been speaking of tragedy. All his directions,  
 " from l. 100, respect this species of the drama only. The application of what he had  
 " said concerning music, is then most naturally made, 1. to the *tibia*, the music of the  
 " acts; and, 2. to *fides*, that of the choir: thus confining himself, as the tenor of this  
 " part required, to tragedy only. Hence is seen the mistake, not only of M. Dacier,  
 " whose comment is in every view insupportable; but, as was hinted, of Heinsius, Lam-  
 " bin, and others, who, with more probability, explained this of the Roman comedy and  
 " tragedy. For, though *tibia* might be allowed to stand for comedy, as opposed to tra-  
 " gædia; [as in fact, we find it in l. ii. Ep. 1. 98,] that being the only instrument  
 " employed in it; yet, in speaking expressly of the music of the stage, *fides* could not de-  
 " terminately enough, and in contradistinction to *tibia*, denote that of tragedy, it being an in-  
 " strument:

“instrument used solely, or principally, in the chorus; of which, the context shews, he  
“alone speaks. It is further to be observed, that, in the application here made, besides  
“the music, the poet takes in the other improvements of the tragic chorus, these hap-  
“pening, as from the nature of the thing they would do, at the same time.

*Notes on the Art of Poetry.*

319.—WITH DANCE AND FLOWING VEST EMBELLISHES HIS PART.

*Traxitque vagus per pulpita vestem.*

“This expresses not only the improvement arising from the ornament of proper dresses,  
“but from the grace of motion: not only the actor, whose peculiar office it was, but the  
“minstrel himself, as appears from hence, conforming his gesture in some sort to the music.

“Of the use and propriety of these gestures, or dances, it will not be easy for us, who see  
“no such things attempted on the modern stage, to form any very clear or exact notions.  
“What we cannot doubt of is, 1. That the several theatrical dances of the antients were  
“strictly conformable to the genius of the different species of composition, to which they  
“were applied. 2. That, therefore, the tragic dance, which more especially accompanied  
“the Chorus, must have been expressive of the highest gravity and decorum, tending to  
“inspire ideas of what is *becoming*, *graceful*, and *majestic*; in which view we cannot but  
“perceive the important assistance it must needs lend to virtue, and how greatly it must  
“contribute to set all her graces and attractions in the fairest light. 3. This idea of the  
“ancient tragic dance, is not solely formed upon our knowledge of the conformity before-  
“mentioned; but is further collected from the name usually given to it, which was *ἑμμέλεια*.  
“This word cannot well be translated into our language; but expresses all that grace and  
“concinnity of motion, which the dignity of the choral song required. 4. Lastly, it must  
“give us a very high notion of the moral effect of this dance, when we find the severe Plato  
“admitting it into his commonwealth.

*Notes on the Art of Poetry.*

326.—HE WHO THE PRIZE, A FILTHY GOAT, TO GAIN,

AT FIRST CONTENDED IN THE TRAGICK STRAIN.

*Carminē qui tragico, vilem certavit ob hircum.*

If I am not greatly deceived, all the Editors, and Commentators on this  
Epistle, have failed to observe, that the *historical* part of it, relative to the  
Græcian Drama, commences at this verse; all of them supposing it to begin,  
55 lines further in the Epistle, on the mention of Thespis; whom Horace as  
clearly, as correctly, describes to be the first *improver*, not *inventor* of Tragedy,  
*whose ORIGINAL* he marks *here*. Much confusion has, I think, arisen from this  
oversight, as I shall endeavour to explain in the following notes; only observ-  
ing in this place, that the Poet, having spoken particularly of all the parts of  
Tragedy,

Tragedy, now enters with the strictest order, and greatest propriety, into its general history, which, by his strictures on *the* CHORUS, he most elegantly, as well as forcibly, connects with his subject, taking occasion to speak *incidentally* of other branches of the Drama, particularly *THE SATYRS, and the OLD COMEDY.*

328.—*Soon too—tho' rude, the graver mood unbroke,*

STRIPT THE ROUGH SATYRS, and essay'd a joke.

*Mox etiam AGRESTES SATYROS, &c.*

“It is not the intention of these notes to retail the accounts of others. I must therefore refer the reader, for whatever concerns the history of the satiric, as I have hitherto done of the tragic and comic drama, to the numerous dissertators on the ancient stage; and, above all, in the case before us, to the learned Casaubon; from whom all that hath been said to any purpose, by modern writers, hath been taken. Only it will be proper to observe one or two particulars, which have been greatly misunderstood, and without which it will be impossible, in any tolerable manner, to explain what follows.

“I. The design of the poet, in these lines, is not to fix the origin of the satyric piece, in ascribing the invention of it to Thespis. This hath been concluded, without the least warrant from his own words, which barely tell us, “that the representation of tragedy was in elder Greece followed by the *satires*,” and indeed the nature of the thing, as well as the testimony of all antiquity, shews it to be impossible. For the *satire* here spoken of is, in all respects, a regular drama, and therefore could not be of earlier date than the times of Æschylus, when the constitution of the drama was first formed. It is true indeed, there was a kind of entertainment of much greater antiquity, which by the antients is sometimes called *satyric*, out of which (as Aristotle assures us) tragedy itself arose, ἡ δὲ τραγωδία διὰ τὸ ἐκ σατυρικῆς μετέβαλεν, ὁψὲ ἀπισσεμνῶν, [περ ποιητ. κ. δ.] But then this was nothing but a chorus of satyrs [Athenæus, l. xiv.] celebrating the festivals of *Bacchus*, with rude songs and uncouth dances; and had little resemblance to that which was afterwards called *satiric*; which, except that it retained the chorus of satyrs, and turned upon some subject relative to *Bacchus*, was of a quite different structure, and, in every respect, as regular a composition as tragedy itself.

“II. There is no doubt but the poem, here distinguished by the name of SATYRI, was in actual use on the Roman stage. This appears from the turn of the poet's whole criticism upon it. Particularly, his address to the Pisos, l. 235 and his observation of the offence which a loose dialogue in this drama would give to a *Roman* auditory, l. 248, make it evident that he had, in fact, the practice of his own stage in view.”

“III. For the absolute merit of these satires, the reader will judge of it himself by comparing the Cyclops, the only piece of this kind remaining to us from antiquity, with the



“ rules here delivered by Horace. Only it may be observed, in addition to what the reader will find elsewhere [n. 4. 223.] apologized in its favour, that the double character of the satires admirably fitted it, as well for a sensible entertainment to the wise, as for the sport and diversion of the vulgar. For, while the grotesque appearance and jesting vein of these fantastic personages amused the one, the other saw much further; and considered them, at the same time, as replete with science, and informed by a spirit of the most abstruse wisdom. Hence important lessons of civil prudence, interesting allusions to public affairs, or a high, refined moral, might, with the highest probability, be insinuated, under the slight cover of a rustic simplicity. And from this instructive cast, which from its nature must be very obscure, if not impenetrable, to us at this day, was, I doubt not, derived the principal pleasure which the ancients found in this species of the drama. If the modern reader would conceive any thing of the nature and degree of this pleasure, he may in part guess at it, from reflecting on the entertainment he himself receives from the characters of the clowns in Shakespeare; who, as the poet himself hath characterized them, use their folly, like a stalking horse, and, under the presentation of that, shoot their wit.” [As you like it.]——*Notes on the Art of Poetry.* \*

This learned note, I think, sets out with a misapprehension of the meaning of Horace, by involving his *instructions* on the SATYRICK DRAMA, with his account of its *Origin*. Nor does he, in the most distant manner, insinuate, tho’ Dacier has asserted the same thing, that the SATYRS owed their first introduction to *Theſpis*; but relates, that the very Poets, who contended in the *Goat-Song*, to which TRAGEDY owes its name, finding it too solemn and severe an entertainment for their rude holiday audience, interspersed the grave strains of tragedy with comick and *satyrical* Interludes, producing thereby a kind of medley, something congenial to what has appeared on our own stage, under the name of TRAGI-COMEDY. Nor, if I am able to read and comprehend the context, do the words of Horace tell us, “ that the representation of Tragedy was, in elder Greece, followed by the SATYRS.” The Satyrs composed a part of the Tragedy in its infancy, as well as in the days of Horace, if his own words may be quoted as authority. On any other construction, his directions, concerning the conduct of the *God* or *Hero* of the piece, are scarcely reconcilable to common sense; and it is almost impossible to mark their being incorporated with the Tragedy, in more expressive terms or images, than by his solicitude to prevent their broad mirth from contaminating its dignity or purity.

\* This, and all the extracts, which are quoted, *Notes on the Art of Poetry*, are taken from the Author of the English Commentary.

*Effutire leges indigna* TRAGÆDIA *versus.*

*Ut festis matrona moveri iussa diebus,*

*INTERERIT SATYRIS paulum pudibunda PROTERVIS.*

*The CYCLOPS* of Euripides, the only SATYRICK DRAMA extant, written at a much later period, than that of which Horace speaks in this place; cannot, I think, convey to us a very exact idea of *the Tragick Pastorals*, whose origin he here describes. *The CYCLOPS*, scarce exceeding 700 lines, might be played, according to the idea of some criticks, after another performance: but that cannot, without the greatest violence to the text, be supposed of the satyrick piece here mentioned by Horace. The idea of *farces*, or *after-pieces*, tho' an inferior branch of the Drama, is, in fact, among the refinements of an improved age. The writers of an early period throw their dramatick materials, serious and ludicrous, into one mass; which the critical chymistry of succeeding times separates and refines. The modern stage, like the antient, owed its birth to the ceremonies of Religion. From *Mysteries* and *Moralities*, it proceeded to more regular Dramas, diversifying their serious scenes, like *the SATYRICK POETS*, with ludicrous representations. This desire of *variety* was one cause of the *irregularity*, as well as extraordinary *length* of their pieces; of which, I believe, they never gave above *one* at the same time of representation. *Farce* is, in point of age, as well as rank, but a younger brother of the Theatre.

Other Criticks have taken the text of Horace in the same sense, that I have here considered it.

AGRESTES SATYROS.] *Silvestres Faunos nudos introduxit: ita enim SATYROS vocant.—Quod vero SATYROS in fabulos inductos dixi, NON PERACTA ID FABULA FACTUM FUISSE intelligendum, SED IN MEDIO FABULÆ, quasi CHOROS. Nannius.*

—SATYROS *puto iterum Romæ inductos; atque ideo de his loqui Horatium, cujusmodi illis sermonem tribuere debeamus, & QUEMADMODUM PRIMUM, ET QUAE DE CAUSA INDUCTI SUNT, ostendentem. Quare cum de SATYRORUM CHORIS, publicè in spectaculo inductis, teste etiam Dionysio Halicarnasseo, minimè dubium sit, etiam postea INTER MEDIOS ACTUS TRAGÆDIARUM adhibitos credibile est.* —DE NORES.

AGRESTES SATYROS.] Hos autem LOCO CHORI introductos intelligit, non, ut quidam volunt, in ipsâ tragædiâ, cum præsertim dicat factum, ut gratâ novitate detinerentur spectatores: quod inter unum & alterum actum sit, CHORI LOCO. In tragædiâ enim ipsâ, cum flebilis, severa, ac gravis sit, non requiritur hujusmodi locorum, ludorumque levitas, quæ tamen inter medios actus tolerari potest, & hoc est quod ait, INCOLUMI GRAVITATE. Ea enim quæ fiunt, quæve dicuntur inter medios actus, extra tragædiam esse intelliguntur, neque imminuunt tragædiæ gravitatem. — DE NORES.

The distinction made by *De Nores* of the SATYRS not making a part of the Tragedy, but barely appearing between the acts, can only signify, that the Tragick and Comick Scenes were kept apart from each other. This is plain from his saying that they held the place of THE CHORUS; not sustaining their continued part in the tragick dialogue, but filling their chief office of singing between the acts. The antient Tragedy was one continued representation, divided into acts by the Chant of the CHORUS; and, otherwise, according to modern ideas, forming *but one act*, without any interruption of the performance.

These antient SATYRICK SONGS, with which the antient Tragedians endeavoured to enliven the Dithyrambicks, gave rise to two different species of poetry. Their rude jests and petulant raillery engendered *the Satire*; and their sylvan character produced *the Pastoral*.

328-2—THO' RUDE, THE GRAVER MOOD UNBROKE—

*Stript the rough Satyrs, and ESSAYED A JOKE.*

—*Agrestes Satyros nudavit, & asper,*

INCOLUMI GRAVITATE, *jocum tentavit.*

" It hath been shewn, that the poet could not intend, in these lines, to *fix the origin of the*  
 " *satiric drama*. But, though this be certain, and the dispute concerning that point be  
 " thereby determined, yet it is to be noted, that he purposely describes the satire in its ruder  
 " and less polished form; glancing even at some barbarities, which deform the Bacchic cho-  
 " rus; which was properly the satiric piece, before Æschylus had, by his regular consti-  
 " tution of the drama, introduced it under a very different form on the stage. The rea-  
 " son of this conduct is given in *n*, on l. 203. Hence the propriety of the word *nudavit*,  
 " which



“ which Lambin rightly interprets, *nudos introduxit satyros*, the poet hereby expressing the monstrous indecorum of this entertainment in its first unimproved state. Alluding also to this ancient character of the *satire*, he calls him *asper*, i. e. rude and petulant; and even adds, that his jests were intemperate, and *without the least mixture of gravity*. For thus, upon the authority of a very ingenious and learned critic, I explain *incolumi gravitate*, i. e. rejecting every thing serious, bidding *farewell*, as we may say, *to all gravity*. Thus [L. iii. O. 5.]

“ *Incolumi fave et urbe Romæ:*

“ i. e. bidding farewell to Jupiter [Capitolinus] and Rome; agreeably to what is said just before,

“ *Anciliorum et nominis et togæ*

“ *OBLITUS, æternæque Vestæ.*

“ or, as SALVUS is used more remarkably in Martial [l. v. 10.]

*Ennius est lectus SALVO tibi, Roma, Marone:*

*Et sua riserunt secula Mæonidem.*

“ Farewell, all gravity, is as remote from the original sense of the words *fare well*, as *incolumi gravitate* from that of *incolumis*, or *salvo Marone* from that of *salvus*.

*Notes on the Art of Poetry.*

The beginning of this note does not, I think, perfectly accord with what has been urged by the same Critick in the note immediately preceding. He there observed, that *the* “ SATYR here spoken of, is, in all respects, a regular Drama, and therefore could not be of earlier date, than the times of Æschylus.”

Here, however, he allows, though in subdued phrase, that, “ though this be certain, and the dispute concerning that point thereby determined, yet it is to be noted, that he purposely describes the Satyr in its RUDER AND LESS POLISHED FORM; glancing even at some barbarities, which deform THE BACCHIC CHORUS; WHICH WAS PROPERLY THE SATYRICK PIECE, before Æschylus had, by his regular constitution of the Drama, introduced it, under a very different form, on the stage.” In a subsequent note, the same learned Critick also says, that “ the connecting particle, *verum*, [*verum ita riores, &c.*] expresses the opposition intended between the original Satyr and that which the Poet approves.” In both these passages the ingenious Commentator seems, from the mere influence of the context, to approach to the interpretation that I have hazarded of this passage, avowedly one of the most obscure parts of the Epistle.

The

The explanation of the words INCOLUMI GRAVITATE, in the latter part of the above note, though favourable to the system of the English Commentary, is not only contrary to the construction of all other interpreters, and, I believe, unwarranted by any acceptation of the word INCOLUMIS, but, in my opinion, less elegant and forcible than the common interpretation.

The line of the Ode referred to,

INCOLUMI Jove, et urbe Romæ?

was never received in the sense, which the learned Critick assigns to it.

The Dauphin Editor interprets it,

STANTE urbe, & Capitolino Jove Romanos protegente.

Schrevelius, to the same effect, explains it,

SALVO Capitolio, quæ Jovis erat sedes.

These interpretations, as they are certainly the most obvious, seem also to be most consonant to the plain sense of the Poet.

330.—*For holiday spectators, flush'd and wild,*

*With new conceits and mummeries were beguil'd.*

*Quippe erat ILLECEBRIS, &c.*

Monsieur Dacier, though he allows that “all that is here said by Horace” “proves incontestibly, that the Satyrick Piece had possession of the Roman stage;” *tout ce qu' Horace dit icy prouve INCONTESTABLEMENT qu'il y avoit des Satyres*; yet thinks that Horace lavished all these instructions on them, chiefly for the sake of the ATELLANE FABLES. The author of the English Commentary is of the same opinion, and labours the point very assiduously. I cannot, however, discover, in any part of Horace's discourse on the SATYRS, one expression glancing towards the ATELLANES, though their OSCAN peculiarities might easily have been marked, so as not to be mistaken.

335.—*That GOD or HERO of the lofty scene,*

*May not, &c.*

*Ne quicumque DEUS, &c.*

The Commentators have given various explanations of this precept. De Noces interprets it to signify that the same actor, who represented a God or Hero in the TRAGICK part of the Drama, must not be employed to represent a Faun or Sylvan in the SATYRICK.

Dacier

*Dacier* has a strange conceit concerning the joint performance of a *Tragedy* and *Atellane* at one time, the same God or Hero being represented as the principal subject and character of both; on which occasion, (says he) the Poet recommends to the author not to debase the God, or Hero of *the TRAGEDY*, by sinking his language and manners too low in *the ATELLANE*; whose stile, as well as measure, should be peculiar to itself, equally distant from *Tragedy* and *Farce*.

The author of the English Commentary tells us, that “ Gods and Heroes “ were introduced as well into the *Satyrick* as *Tragick* Drama, and often the “ very same Gods and Heroes, which had born a part in THE PRECEDING “ TRAGEDY; a practice, which Horace, I suppose, intended, by this hint, to “ recommend as most regular.”

The two short notes of Schrevelius, in my opinion, more clearly explain the sense of Horace, and are in these words.

*Poema serium, jocos SATYRICIS ita COMMISCERE—ne scilicet is, qui paulo ante DEI instar aut HEROIS in scenam fuit introductus, postea lacernosus prodeat.*

On the whole, supposing *the SATYRICK Piece* to be *Tragi-Comick*, as *Dacier* himself seems half inclined to believe, the precept of Horace only recommends to the author so to support his principal personage, that his behaviour in the SATYRICK scenes shall not debase the character he has sustained in the TRAGICK. No specimen remaining of the Roman SATYRICK Piece, I may be permitted to illustrate the rule of Horace by a brilliant example from the *serio-comick* HISTORIES of the Sovereign of our Drama. The example to which I point, is the character of *the PRINCE of WALES*, in the two Parts of *Henry the Fourth*. Such a natural and beautiful decorum is maintained in the display of that character, that the *Prince* is as discoverable in the loose scenes with *Falstaff* and his associates, as in the Presence Chamber, or the Closet. After *the natural*, though MIXT DRAMAS, of *Shakespeare*, and *Beaumont and Fletcher*, had prevailed on our stage, it is surprising that our progress to pure *Tragedy* and *Comedy*, should have been interrupted, or disturbed, by *the regular monster of TRAGI-COMEDY*, nursed by *Southerne* and *Dryden*.



346.—LET ME NOT, PISOS, IN THE SYLVAN SCENE,  
 USE OBJECT TERMS ALONE, AND PHRASES MEAN !  
*Non ego INORNATA & DOMINANTIA, &c.*

The author of the English Commentary proposes a conjectural emendation of Horace's text—HONORATA instead of INORNATA—and accompanied with a new and elevated sense assigned to the word DOMINANTIA. This last word is interpreted in the same manner by *De Nores*. Most other Commentators explain it to signify *common words*, observing its analogy to the Greek term *κῆρυξ*. The same expression prevails in our own tongue—a REIGNING word, a REIGNING fashion, &c. The general cast of the SATYR seems to render a caution against a lofty stile not very necessary ; yet it must be acknowledged that such a caution is given by the Poet, exclusive of the above proposed variation.

*Ne quicumque DEUS —————*  
*Migret in obscuras HUMILI SERMONE tabernas,*  
*Aut dum vitat humum, NUBES & INANIA CAPTET.*

350.—*Davus may jest, &c.*—*Davusne loquatur, &c.*

It should seem from hence, that the common characters of Comedy, as well as the Gods and Heroes of Tragedy, had place in the SATYRICK DRAMA, cultivated in the days of Horace. Of the manner in which the antient writers sustained the part of Silenus, we may judge from the CYCLOPS of Euripides, and the PASTORALS of Virgil.

Vossius attempts to shew from some lines of this part of the Epistle, [*Ne quicumque Deus, &c.*] that the SATYRS were subjoined to the Tragick scenes, not incorporated with them : and yet at the same moment he tells us, and with apparent approbation, that DIOMEDES quotes our Poet to prove that they were BLENDED WITH EACH OTHER : *simul ut spectator, INTER RES TRAGICAS, SERIASQUE, SATYRORUM QUOQUE JOCIS, & LUSIBUS, delectaretur.*

I cannot more satisfactorily conclude all that I have to urge, on the subject of the SATYRICK DRAMA, as here described by Horace, than by one more short extract from the notes of the ingenious author of the English Commentary, to the substance of which extract I give the most full assent.

“ The Greek Drama, we know, had its origin from the loose, licentious raillery of the  
 “ rout of Bacchus, indulging to themselves the freest sallies of taunt and invective; as would  
 “ best suit to lawless natures, inspirited by festal mirth, and made extravagant by wine.  
 “ Hence arose, and with a character answering to this original, the *Satiric Drama*; the spirit  
 “ of which was afterwards, in good measure, revived and continued in the Old Comedy,  
 “ and itself preserved, though with considerable alteration in the form, through all the  
 “ several periods of the Greek stage; even when Tragedy, which arose out of it, was brought  
 “ to its last perfection.”

368.—*To a short syllable, a long subjoin'd,*

*Forms an IAMBICK FOOT.*

*Syllaba longa, brevi subiecta, vocatur Iambus.*

Horace having, after the example of his master Aristotle, slightly mentioned the first rise of Tragedy in the form of a CHORAL SONG, subjoining an account of the SATYRICK CHORUS, that was soon (*mox etiam*) combined with it, proceeds to speak particularly of the Iambick verse, which he has before mentioned generally, as the measure best accommodated to the Drama. In this instance, however, the Poet has trespassed against the order and method observed by his philosophical guide; and by that trespass broken the thread of his history of the Drama, which has added to the difficulty and obscurity of this part of his Epistle. Aristotle does not speak of the MEASURE, till he has brought Tragedy, through all its progressive stages, from the Dithyrambicks, down to its establishment by Æschylus and Sophocles. If the reader would judge of the poetical beauty, as well as logical precision, of such an arrangement, let him transfer this section of the Epistle [beginning, in the original at v. 251. and ending at 274.] to the end of the 284th line; by which transposition, or I am much mistaken, he will not only disembarass this historical part of it, relative to the Græcian stage, but will pass by a much easier, and more elegant, transition, to the Poet's application of the narrative to the Roman Drama.

The English reader, inclined to make the experiment, must take the lines of the translation from v. 268. to v. 403, both inclusive, and insert them after v. 418.

*In shameful silence lost the pow'r to wound.*

It is further to be observed that this detail on the IAMBICK is not, with strict propriety, annexed to a critical history of the SATYR, in which, as Aristotle

infinuates, was used *the* CAPERING *Tetrameter*, and, as the Grammarians observe, *Trifyllabicks*.

394.—PISOS! BE GRÆCIAN MODELS, &c.

Pope has imitated and illustrated this passage.

Be Homer's works your study and delight,  
Read them by day, and meditate by night;  
'Thence form your judgment, thence your maxims bring,  
And trace the Muses upwards to their spring.  
Still with itself compar'd, his text peruse!  
And let your comment be the Mantuan Muse!

*Essay on Criticism.*

404.—A KIND OF TRAGICK ODE, UNKNOWN BEFORE,  
THESPI, 'TIS SAID, INVENTED FIRST.  
IGNOTUM *Tragicæ* GENUS INVENISSE *Camæne*  
*Dicitur*, &c.

It is surprising that Dacier, who, in a controversial note, in refutation of Heinsius, has so properly remarked Horace's adherence to Aristotle, should not have observed that his history of the Drama opens and proceeds nearly in the same order. Aristotle indeed does not name Thespis, but we cannot but include his improvements among the changes, to which the Critick refers, before Tragedy acquired a permanent form under Æschylus. Thespis seems not only to have embodied *the* CHORUS, but to have provided a theatrical apparatus for an itinerant exhibition; to have furnished disguises for his performers, and to have broken the continuity of *the* CHORUS by an *Interlocutor*; to whom Æschylus adding another personage, thereby first created DRAMATICK DIALOGUE; while at the same time by a *further diminution of the* CHORUS, by improving the dresses of the actors, and drawing them from their travelling waggon to a fixt stage, he created a *regular theatre*.

It appears then that neither Horace, nor Aristotle, ascribe *the origin* of Tragedy to THESPI. The Poet first mentions the rude beginning of Tragedy, (*carmen tragicum*) *the* GOAT-SONG; he then speaks of *the* Satyrick Chorus, soon after interwoven with it; and then proceeds to the *improvements* of these Bacchic Festivities, by Thespis, and Æschylus; though their perfection and final establishment is ascribed by Aristotle to Sophocles.



DACIER very properly renders this passage, *On dit que Thespis fut le premier qui inventa une espece de Tragedie auparavant inconnue aux Grecs.*  
 “Thespis is said to be the first inventor of a species of Tragedy, before unknown to the Greeks.”

Boileau seems to have considered this part of the Epistle in the same light, that I have endeavoured to place it.

La Tragedie informe & grossiere au naissant  
 N'etoit qu'un simple Chœur, ou chacun en dansant,  
 Et du Dieu des Raisins entonnant les louanges,  
 S'efforçoit d'attirer de fertiles vendanges.  
 La le vin et la joie eveillant les esprits,  
*Du plus babile chantre un Bouc étoit le prix.*  
 THESPIS fut le premier, qui barbouillé de lie,  
 Promena par les bourgs cette heureuse folie ;  
 Et d'acteurs mal ornés chargeant un tombereau,  
 Amusa les passans d'un spectacle nouveau.  
 ÆSCHYLE dans le Chœur jetta les personages ;  
 D'un masque plus honnête habilla les visages :  
 Sur les ais d'un Theatre en public exhaussé,  
 Fit paroître l'acteur d'un brodequin chaussé.

L'ART POËTIQUE, Chant Troisième.

417. ————— *the SLAND'ROUS CHORUS drown'd*  
*In shameful silence, lost the pow'r to wound.*

#### CHORUSQUE

“TURPITER OBTCUIT, *sublato jure nocendi.*”

“Evidently because, though the *jus nocendi* was taken away, yet that was no good reason why the Chorus should entirely cease. M. Dacier mistakes the matter. *Le chœur se tût ignominieusement, parce-que la loi reprima sa licence, et que ce fut, à proprement parler, la loi qui le bannit ; ce qu' Horace regarde comme une espece de fêtrissure.* Properly speaking, the law only abolished the abuse of the chorus. The ignominy lay in dropping the entire use of it, on account of this restraint. Horace was of opinion, that the chorus ought to have been retained, though the state had abridged it of the licence, it so much delighted in, of an illimited, and intemperate satire, *Sublatus chorus fuit*, says Scaliger, *cujus illæ videntur esse præcipuæ partes, ut potissimum quos liberet, læderent.*”

*Notes on the Art of Poetry.*

If Dacier be mistaken in this instance, his mistake is common to all the Commentators; not one of whom, the learned and ingenious author of the above note excepted, has been able to extract from these words any marks of Horace's predilection in favour of a CHORUS, or censure of "its culpable omission" in Comedy. De Nores expresses the general sense of the Criticks on this passage.

TURPITER.] *Quia lex, declarata Veteris Comædiæ scriptorum improbitate, eos a maledicendi licentiâ deterruit.*—Sicuti enim antea summâ cum laude Vetus Comædia accepta est, ita postea SUMMA EST CUM TURPITUDINE VETANTIBUS ETIAM LEGIBUS REPUDIATA, quia probis hominibus, quia sapientibus, quia integris maledixerit. Quare Comædiæ postea conscriptæ ad hujusce Veteris differentiam SUBLATO CHORO, NOVÆ appellatæ sunt.

What Horace himself says on a similar occasion, of the suppression of the Fescennine verses, in the Epistle to Augustus, is perhaps the best comment on this passage.

— quin etiam lex  
*Pœnaque lata, malo quæ nollet carmine quenquam*  
*Describi: VERTERE MODUM FORMIDINE FUSTIS,*  
*AD BENE DICENDUM DELECTANDUMQUE REDACTI.*

421.—*Daring their Græcian masters to forsake,  
 And for their themes Domestick Glories take.*

*Nec minimum meruere decus, vestigia Græca  
 Ausi deferere, & celebrare domestica facta.*

The author of the English Commentary has a note on this passage, replete with fine taste, and sound criticism.

" This judgment of the poet, recommending domestic subjects, as fittest for the stage, may be enforced from many obvious reasons. As, 1. that it renders the drama infinitely more affecting: and this on many accounts. 1. As a subject, taken from our own annals, must of course carry with it an air of greater probability, at least to the generality of the people, than one borrowed from those of any other nation. 2. As we all find a personal interest in the subject. 3. As it of course affords the best and easiest opportunities of catching our minds, by frequent references to our manners, prejudices, and customs. And of how great importance this is, may be learned from hence, that, even in the exhibition of foreign characters, dramatic writers have found themselves obliged to

" sacrifice

“ sacrifice truth and probability to the humour of the people, and to dress up their personages, contrary to their own better judgment, in some degree according to the mode and manners of their respective countries (\*). And, 4. as the writer himself, from an intimate acquaintance with the character and genius of his own nation, will be more likely to draw the manners with life and spirit.

“ II. Next, which should ever be one great point in view, it renders the drama more generally useful in its moral destination. For, it being conversant about domestic acts, the great instruction of the fable more sensibly affects us; and the characters exhibited, from the part we take in their good or ill qualities, will more probably influence our conduct.

“ III. Lastly, this judgment will deserve the greater regard, as the conduct recommended was, in fact, the practice of our great models, the Greek writers; in whose plays, it is observable, there is scarcely a single scene, which lies out of the confines of Greece.

“ But, notwithstanding these reasons, the practice hath, in all times, been but little followed. The Romans, after some few attempts in this way (from whence the poet took the occasion of delivering it as a dramatic precept), soon relapsed into their old use; as appears from Seneca's, and the titles of other plays, written in, or after the Augustan age. Succeeding times continued the same attachment to Grecian, with the addition of an equal fondness for Roman, subjects. The reason in both instances hath been ever the same: that strong and early prejudice, approaching somewhat to adoration, in favour of the illustrious names of those two great states. The account of this matter is very easy; for their writings, as they furnish the business of our younger, and the amusement of our riper, years; and more especially make the study of all those, who devote themselves to poetry and the stage, insensibly infix in us an excessive veneration for all affairs in which they were concerned; insomuch, that no other subjects or events seem considerable enough, or rise, in any proportion, to our ideas of the dignity of the tragic scene, but such as time and long admiration have consecrated in the annals of their story. Our Shakespeare was, I think, the first that broke through this bondage of classical superstition. And he owed this felicity, as he did some others, to his want of what is called the

“ (\*) L'étude égale des poètes de différens tems à plaire à leurs spectateurs, a encore influé dans la maniere de peindre les caracteres. Ceux qui paroissent sur la scene Angloise, Espagnole, François, sont plus Anglois, Espagnols, ou François que Grecs ou Romains, en un mot que ce qu'ils doivent être. Il ne faut qu'en peu de discernement pour s'apercevoir que nos Césars et nos Achilles, en gardant même une partie de leur caractère primitif, prennent droit de naturalité dans le pays où ils sont transplantés, semblables à ces portraits, qui sortent de la main d'un peintre Flamand, Italien, ou François, et qui portent l'empreinte du pays. On veut plaire à sa nation, et rien ne plait tant que le ressemblance de manieres et de enie ” P. Brumoy, vol. i. p. 200.]



" advantage of a learned education. Thus uninfluenced by the weight of early prepossession, he struck at once into the road of nature and common sense: and without designing, without knowing it, hath left us in his historical plays, with all their anomalies, an exacter resemblance of the Athenian stage, than is any where to be found in its most professed admirers and copyists.

" I will only add, that, for the more successful execution of this rule of celebrating domestic acts, much will depend on the æra, from whence the subject is taken. Times too remote have almost the same inconveniences, and none of the advantages, which attend the ages of Greece and Rome. And for those of later date, they are too much familiarized to us, and have not as yet acquired that venerable cast and air, which tragedy demands, and age only can give. There is no fixing this point with precision. In the general, that æra is the fittest for the poet's purpose, which, though fresh enough in our minds to warm and interest us in the event of the action, is yet at so great a distance from the present times, as to have lost all those mean and disparaging circumstances, which unavoidably adhere to recent deeds, and, in some measure, sink the noblest modern transactions to the level of ordinary life."

*Notes on the Art of Poetry.*

The author of the Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope elegantly enforces a like opinion, and observes that Milton left a list of thirty-three subjects for Tragedy, all taken from the English Annals.

423.—*Whether THE GOWN prescrib'd a stile more mean,*

*Or THE INWOVEN PURPLE rais'd the scene.*

*Vel qui PRÆTEXTAS, vel qui docuere TOGATAS.*

THE GOWN (*Toga*) being the common Roman habit, signifies *Comedy*; and THE INWOVEN PURPLE (*prætecta*) being appropriated to the higher orders, refers to *Tragedy*. *Togata* was also used as a general term to denote all plays, in which the habits, manners, and arguments were ROMAN; those, of which the customs and subjects were GRÆCIAN, like the Comedies of Terence, were called *Palliata*.

429.—*But you, bright heirs of the Pompilian Blood,*

*Never the verse approve, &c.*

*Vos, O Pompilius Sanguis, &c.*

The English Commentary exhibits a very just and correct analysis of this portion of the Epistle, but neither here, nor in any other part of it, observes the earnestness with which the Poet, on every new topick, addresses his discourse to the *Pisos*; a practice, that has not passed unnoticed by other Commentators. On this passage De Nores writes thus.

*Vos*

*Vos O Pompilius Sanguis!]* Per apostrophem SERMONEM CONVERTIT AD PISONES, EOS ADMONENS, UT SIBI CAVEANT ab hujusmodi Romanorum poetarum errore. Videtur autem EOS AD ATTENTIONEM EXCITARE dum ait, Vos O! et quæ sequuntur.

434.—*Because DEMOCRITUS, &c.]*  
*Excludit sanos Helicone poetas Democritus.*

De Nores has a comment on this passage; but the ambiguity of the Latin relative renders it uncertain, how far the Critick applies particularly to the Pisos, except by the *Apostrophe* taken notice of in the last note. His words are these. *Nisi harum DEMOCRITICORUM opinionem Horatius hoc in loco refutasset, frustra de poeticâ facultate IN HAC AD PISONES EPISTOLA præcepta literis tradidisset, cum arte ipsâ repudiatâ, AB HIS tantummodo insanie & furori daretur locus.*

443.—*Which no vile CUTBERD's razor'd hands profane.*  
*Tonfori LYCINO.*

*Lycinus* was not only, as appears from Horace, an eminent Barber; but said, by some, to have been created a Senator by Augustus, on account of his enmity to Pompey.

466.—ON NATURE'S PATTERN TOO I'LL BID HIM LOOK,  
 AND COPY MANNERS FROM HER LIVING BOOK.  
*Respicere exemplar vitæ, morumque jubebo*  
*DOCTUM IMITATOREM, & veras hinc ducere voces.*

This precept seeming, at first sight, liable to be interpreted as recommending *personal imitations*, De Nores, Dacier, and the Author of the English Commentary, all concur to inculcate the principles of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, shewing that the truth of representation (*veræ voces*) must be derived from an imitation of *general nature*, not from copying *individuals*. Mankind, however, being a mere collection of *individuals*, it is impossible for the Poet, not to found his observations on particular objects; and his chief skill seems to consist in the happy address, with which he is able to *generalize* his ideas, and to sink the likeness of the individual in the resemblance of universal nature.



nature. A great Poet, and a great Painter, have each illustrated this doctrine most happily; and with their observations I shall conclude this note.

Chacun peint avec art dans ce nouveau miroir,  
S'y vit avec plaisir, ou crut ne s'y point voir.  
L'Avare des premiers rit du tableau fidele  
D'un Avare, souvent tracé sur son modèle;  
Et mille fois un Fat, finement exprimé,  
Méconnut le portrait, sur lui-même formé.

BOILEAU, *L'Art Poet.* ch. iii.

" Nothing in the art requires more attention and judgment, or more of that power of discrimination, which may not improperly be called Genius, than the steering between general ideas and individuality; for tho' the body of the whole must certainly be composed by the first, in order to communicate a character of grandeur to the whole, yet a dash of the latter is sometimes necessary to give an interest. An individual model, copied with scrupulous exactness, makes a mean stile like the Dutch; and the neglect of an actual model, and the method of proceeding solely from idea, has a tendency to make the Painter degenerate into a mannerist.

" It is necessary to keep the mind in repair, to replace and refreshen those impressions of nature, which are continually wearing away.

" A circumstance mentioned in the life of Guido, is well worth the attention of Artists: He was asked from whence he borrowed his idea of beauty, which is acknowledged superior to that of every other Painter; he said he would shew all the models he used, and ordered a common Porter to sit before him, from whom he drew a beautiful countenance; this was intended by Guido as an exaggeration of his conduct; but his intention was to shew that he thought it necessary to have *some model* of nature before you, however you deviate from it, and correct it from the idea which you have formed in your mind of *perfect beauty*.

" In Painting it is far better to have a *model* even to *depart* from, than to have nothing fixed and certain to determine the idea: There is something then to proceed on, something to be corrected; so that even supposing that no part is taken, the model has still been not without use.

" Such habits of intercourse with nature, will at least create that *variety* which will prevent any one's prognosticating what manner of work is to be produced, on knowing the subject, which is the most disagreeable character an Artist can have."

Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Notes on Preshoy*.



480.—ALBIN'S HOPEFUL.] *Filius ALBINI.*

Albinus was said to be a rich Usurer. All that is necessary to explain this passage to the English reader, is to observe, that *the Roman Pound consisted of TWELVE Ounces.*

487.—*Worby the CEDAR and the CYPRESS.*

The antients, for the better preservation of their manuscripts, rubbed them with the juice of *Cedar*, and kept them in cases of *Cypress*.

496.—SHALL LAMIA IN OUR SIGHT HER SONS DEVOUR,  
AND GIVE THEM BACK ALIVE THE SELF-SAME HOUR?

*Neu prænse Lamie vivum puerum extrabat alvo.*

Alluding most probably to some Drama of the time, exhibiting so monstrous and horrible an incident.

## 503.—THE SOSII.] Roman bookfellers.

523.—CHÆRILUS.] A wretched poet, who celebrated the actions, and was distinguished by the patronage, of Alexander.

## 527.—IF HOMER SEEM TO NOD, OR CHANCE TO DREAM.]

It may not be disagreeable to the reader to see what two poets of our own country have said on this subject.

— fowl descriptions are offensive still,

Either for being *like*, or being *ill*.

For who, without a qualm, hath ever look'd

On holy garbage, tho' by Homer cook'd?

Whose railing heroes, and whose wounded Gods,

Make some suspect he snores, as well as nods.

But I offend—Virgil begins to frown,

And Horace looks with indignation down:

My blushing Muse with conscious fear retires,

And whom they like, implicitly admires.

*ROSCOMMON'S Essay on Translated Verse.*

A prudent chief not always must display  
 Her pow'rs in equal ranks, and fair array:  
 But with th' occasion and the place comply,  
 Conceal his force, may seem sometimes to fly.  
 Those oft are stratagems, which errors seem,  
 Nor is it Homer nods, but we that dream.

POPE'S *Essay on Criticism*.

530.—POEMS AND PICTURES ARE ADJUDG'D ALIKE.

*Ut pictura poesis.*

Here ends, in my opinion, the *didactic* part of this Epistle; and it is remarkable that it concludes, as it begun, with a reference to the Analogy between Poetry and Painting. The arts are indeed congenial, and the same general principles govern both. Artists might collect many useful hints from this Epistle. The Lectures of the President of the Royal Academy are not merely accommodated to the study of Painters; but Poets may refine their taste, and derive the most valuable instruction, from the perusal of those judicious and elegant discourses.

535.—O THOU, MY PISO'S ELDER HOPE AND PRIDE!

O MAJOR JUVENUM!

We are now arrived at that portion of the Epistle, which I must confess I am surpris'd, that any Commentator ever past, without observing the peculiar language and conduct of the Poet. There is a kind of awful affection in his manner; wonderfully calculated to move our feelings and excite our attention. The DIDACTICK and the EPISTOLARY stile were never more happily blended. The Poet assumes the air of a father advising his son, rather than of a teacher instructing his pupils. Many Criticks have thrown out a cursory observation or two, as it were extorted from them by the pointed expressions of the Poet: but none of them, that I have consulted, have attempted to assign any reason, why Horace, having closed his particular precepts, addresses all the remainder of his Epistle, on the nature and expediency of Poetical pursuits, to *the ELDER PISO* only. I have endeavoured to give the most natural reason for this conduct; a reason which, if I am not deceived, renders the whole of the Epistle interesting, as well as clear and consistent; a reason which I am the  
 more



more inclined to think substantial, as it confirms in great measure the system of the Author of the English Commentary, only shewing the reflections on the Drama in THIS EPISTLE, as well as in THE EPISTLE TO AUGUSTUS, to be incidental, rather than the principal subject, and main design, of the Poet,

Jason De Nores, in this instance, as in most others, has paid more attention to his Author, than the rest of the Commentators. His note is as follows.

O MAJOR JUVENUM!] *Per apostrophem ad MAJOREM NATU ex Pisonibus convertis orationem. Reddit rationem quare summum, ac perfectissimum poema esse debeat. Utitur autem proemia quasi quodam ad BENEVOLENTIAM & ATTENTIONEM comparandum. Sumit autem BENEVOLENTIAM à patris & filii laudibus: ATTENTIONEM, dum ait, "Hoc tibi dictum tolle memor!" Quasi dicat, per asseverationem, FIRMUM omnino et VERUM.*

543.—*Boasts not MESSALA'S PLEADINGS, nor is deem'd*  
AULUS IN JURISPRUDENCE.

The Poet, with great delicacy, throws in a compliment to these distinguished characters of his time, for their several eminence in their profession. Messala is more than once mentioned as the friend and patron of Horace.

562.—*Forty thousand sesterces a year.*

The pecuniary qualification for the Equestrian Order. *Census equestrem summam nummorum.*

565.—*Nothing, IN SPITE OF GENIUS, YOU'LL commence.*

*Tu nihil, invitâ dices faciesve Minervâ.*

Horace, says Dacier, here addresses the ELDER PISO, as a man of mature years and understanding; and he begins with panegyrick, rather than advice, in order to soften the precepts he is about to lay down to him.

The explication of De Nores is much to the same effect, as well as that of many other Commentators.

567.—*But grant you should hereafter write.*

*Si quid tamen olim scripseris.*

This, says Dacier, was some time afterwards actually the case, if we may believe the old Scholiast, who writes that *this PISO composed Tragedies.*



568. — METIUS.] A great Critick; and said to be appointed by Augustus as a Judge, to appreciate the merit of literary performances. His name and office are, on other occasions, mentioned and recognized by Horace.

570. — *Weigh the work well, AND KEEP IT BACK NINE YEARS!*

NONUMQUE PREMATUR IN ANNUM!

This precept, which, like many others in the Epistle, is rather retailed, than invented, by Horace, has been thought by some Criticks rather extravagant; but it acquires in this place, as addressed to the ELDER PRISO, a concealed archness, very agreeable to the Poet's stile and manner. Pope has applied the precept with much humour, but with more open raillery than suited the writer's purpose in this Epistle.

I drop at last, but in unwilling ears,

This wholesome counsel — KEEP YOUR PIECE NINE YEARS!

VIDA, in his Poeticks, after the strongest censure of carelessness and precipitation, concludes with a caution against too excessive an attention to correctness, too frequent revisals, and too long delay of publication. The passage is as elegant as judicious.

Verum esto hic etiam modus: huic imponere curam

Nescivere aliqui finem, medicasque secandis

Morbis abstinuisse manus, & parcere tandem

Immites, donec macie confectus et aeger

Aruit exhausto velut omni sanguine fœtus,

Nativumque decus posuit, dum plurima ubique

Deformat scotos artus inhonesta cicatrix.

Tuque ideo vitæ usque memor brevioris, ubi annos

Post aliquot (neque enim NUMERUM, neque TEMPORA pone

CERTA tibi) addideris decoris satis, atque nitoris,

Rumpe moras, opus ingentem dimitte per orbem,

Perque manus, perque ora virum permitte vagari.

POST. lib. 3.

392. — AND

592.—AND ON THE SACRED TABLE GRAVE THE LAW.

LEGES INCIDERE LIGNO.

Laws were originally written in verse, and graved on wood. The Roman laws were engraved on copper. DACIER.

595.—TYRTÆUS.] An ancient Poet, who is said to have been given to the Spartans as a General by the Oracle, and to have animated the Troops by his Verses to such a degree, as to be the means of their triumph over the Messenians, after two defeats: to which Roscommon alludes in his *Essay on translated Verse*.

When by impulse from Heav'n, TYRTÆUS sung,  
In drooping soldiers a new courage sprung;  
Reviving Sparta now the fight maintain'd,  
And what two Gen'als lost, a Poet gain'd.

Some fragments of his works are still extant. They are written in the Elegiac measure; yet the sense is not, as in other Poets, always bound in by the Couplet; but often breaks out into the succeeding verse: a practice, that certainly gives variety and animation to the measure; and which has been successfully imitated in the rhyme of our own language by Dryden, and other good writers.

604.—Deem then with reverence, &c.

*Ne forte pudori*

*Sit tibi Musa, Lyre solers, & Cantor Apollo.*

The author of the English Commentary agrees, that this noble encomium on Poetry is addressed to *the Pisos*. All other Commentators apply it, as surely the text warrants, to *the Elder Piso*. In a long controversial note on this passage, the learned Critick abovementioned also explains the text thus. "In fact, this whole passage [from *et vite*, &c. to *cantor Apollo*] obliquely glances at the two sorts of poetry, peculiarly cultivated by himself, and is an indirect apology for his own choice of them. For 1. *vita monstrata via est*, is the character of his *Sermones*. And 2. all the rest of his *Odes*,"—"I must add, the very terms of the Apology so expressly define and characterize

"Lyrick



"Lyrick Poetry, that it is something strange, it should have escaped vulgar notice." There is much ingenuity in this interpretation, and it is supported with much learning and ability; yet I cannot think that Horace meant to conclude this fine encomium, on the dignity and excellence of the Art of Poetry, by a partial reference to the two particular species of it, that had been the objects of his own attention. The MUSE, and APOLLO, were the avowed patrons and inspirers of Poetry in general, whether Epick, Dramatick, Civil, Moral, or Religious; all of which are enumerated by Horace in the course of his panegyrick, and referred to in the conclusion of it, that PISO might not for a moment think himself degraded by his attention to Poetry.

*In hoc epilogo reddit breviter rationem, quare utilitates à poetis mortalium vitæ allatas recensuerit: ne scilicet Pisones, ex nobilissima Calpurniorum familia ortos, Musarum & Artis Poeticæ quam profitebantur, aliquando pœniteret.*

DE NOBES.

*Hec, inquit, ad recensui, ut quàm olim res arduas poetica tractaveris, cognoscas, & ne Musas contempnas, atque in Poetarum referri numerum, erubescas.*

NANNIUS.

*Ne forte pudori.] Hæc dixi, O PISO, ne te pudeat Poetam esse.*

SCHREVELIUS.

608.—WHETHER GOOD VERSE OF NATURE IS THE FRUIT,  
OR RAIS'D BY ART, HAS LONG BEEN IN DISPUTE.

In writing precepts for poetry to young persons, this question could not be forgotten. Horace therefore, to prevent the Pisos from falling into a fatal error, by too much confidence in their Genius, asserts most decidedly, that Nature and Art must both conspire to form a Poet.

DACIER.

The Duke of Buckingham has taken up this subject very happily.

*Number and Rhyme, and that harmonious sound,  
Which never does the ear with harshness wound,  
Are necessary, yet but vulgar arts;  
For all in vain these superficial parts  
Contribute to the structure of the whole;  
Without a GENIUS too; for that's the Soul!*

A spirit,



A *spirit*, which inspires the work throughout,  
As that of *Nature* moves the world about.

As all is dullness, where the *Fancy's* bad,  
So without *Judgement*, *Fancy* is but mad:  
And *Judgement* has a boundless influence,  
Not only in the choice of *words*, or *sense*,  
But on the *world*, on *manners*, and on *men*;  
*Fancy* is but the *feather* of the pen:  
*Reason* is that substantial useful part,  
Which gains the *head*, while t'other wins the *heart*.

*Essay on Poetry.*

626.—As the *fly hawk*, &c.] Various Commentators concur in marking the *personal* application of this passage.

Faithful friends are necessary, to apprise a Poet of his errors: but such friends are rare, and difficult to be distinguished by rich and powerful Poets, like the *Pisos*. DACIER.

PISONEM admonet, ut minime hoc genus divitum poetarum imitetur, neminemque vel jam pransum, aut donatum, ad suorum carminum emendationem admittat. NEQUE ENIM POTERIT ILLE NON VEHEMENTER LAUDARE, ETIAMSI VITUPERANDA VIDEANTUR. DE NORES.

In what sense Roscommon, the Translator of this Epistle, understood this passage, the following lines from another of his works will testify.

I pity from my soul unhappy men,  
Compell'd by want to prostitute their pen:  
Who must, like lawyers, either starve or plead,  
And follow, right or wrong, where guineas lead:  
But you, *Pompeilian*, *wealthy*, *pamper'd Heirs*,  
Who to your country owe your swords and cares,  
Let no vain hope your easy mind seduce!  
For rich ill poets are without excuse.  
'Tis very dang'rous, tam'ring with a Muse;  
The profit's small, and you have much to lose:  
For tho' true wit adorns your birth, or place,  
Degenerate lines degrade th' attainted race.

*Essay on Translated Verse.*

630.—But

630.—*But if he keeps a table, &c. — Si vera est unctam, &c.*

“ Here (says *Dacier*) the Poet pays, *en passant*, a very natural and delicate compliment to *the Pisos*.” The drift of the Poet is evident, but I cannot discover the compliment.

636.—*Is there a man, to whom you've given ought,  
Or mean to give ?*

*Te, seu denaris, &c.*

Here the Poet advises *THE ELDER PISO* never to read his verses to a man, to whom he has made a promise, or a present: a venal friend cannot be a good Critick; he will not speak his mind freely to his patron; but, like a corrupt judge, betray truth and justice for the sake of interest. *DACIER.*

648.—*Kings have been said to ply repeated bowls, &c.*

*Reges dicuntur, &c.*

*Regum exemplo PISONES ADMONET, ut neminem admittant ad suorum carminum emendationem, nisi prius optime cognitum, atque perspectum.* *DE NORES.*

654.—*QUINTILIUS.*] The Poet *Quintilius Varus*, the relation and intimate friend of Virgil and Horace; of whom the latter lamented his death in a pathetick and beautiful Ode, still extant in his works. *Quintilius* appears to have been some time dead, at the time of our Poet's writing this Epistle.

*DACIER.*

*QUINTILIUS.*] *Descriptis adulatorum moribus & consuetudine, affert optimi & sapientissimi judicis exemplum: Quintilii scilicet, qui tanta erat auctoritatis apud Romanos, ut ei VIRGILII OPERA AUGUSTUS TRADIDERIT EMENDANDA.*

*DE NORES.*

THE



664.—THE MAN, IN WHOM GOOD SENSE AND HONOUR JOIN.

It particularly suited Horace's purpose to paint the severe and rigid judge of composition. Pope's plan admitted softer colours in his draught of a true Critick.

But where's the man, who counsel can bestow,  
Still pleas'd to teach, and yet not proud to know ?  
Unbias'd, or by favour, or by spite ;  
Not dully prepossess'd, nor blindly right ;  
Tho' learn'd, well-bred ; and tho' well-bred, sincere ;  
Modestly bold, and humanly severe :  
Who to a friend his faults can freely show,  
And gladly praise the merit of a foe ?  
Bless'd with a taste exact, yet unconfin'd ;  
A knowledge both of books and human kind ;  
Gen'rous converse ; a soul exempt from pride ;  
And love to praise, with reason on his side ?

*Essay on Criticism.*

684.—WHILE WITH HIS HEAD ERECT HE THREATS THE SKIES.

“ Horace, (says *Dacier*) diverts himself with describing the folly of a Poet, whom his flatterers have driven mad.” To whom the caution against flatterers was address'd, has before been observed by *Dacier*. This description therefore, growing immediately out of that caution, must be considered as address'd to THE ELDER PISO.

699.—Leap'd COLDLY into *Ætna's* burning mount.

*Ardentem FRIGIDUS Ætnam insiluit.*

This is but a cold conceit, not much in the usual manner of Horace.

710.—Whether, the victim of incestuous love,

THE SACRED MONUMENT he striv'd to move.

*An TRISTE BIDENTAL moverit incestus.*

The BIDENTAL was a place that had been struck with lightning, and afterwards expiated by the erection of an altar and the sacrifice of sheep ; *hostiis*



BIDENTIBUS; from which it took its name. The removal or disturbance of this sacred monument was deemed sacrilege; and the attempt, a supposed judgement from heaven, as a punishment for some heavy crime.

718.—HANGS ON HIM, NE’ER TO QUIT, WITH CEASELESS SPEECH.

TILL GORG’D, AND FULL OF BLOOD, A VERY LEECH.

The English Commentary introduces the explication of the last hundred and eleven lines of this Epistle, the lines which, I think, determine the scope and intention of the whole, in the following manner.

“ Having made all the reasonable allowances which a writer could expect, he (Horace) goes on to enforce *the general instruction of this part*, viz. A DILIGENCE IN WRITING, by shewing [from l. 366 to 379] that a *mediocrity*, however tolerable, or even commendable, it might be in other arts, would never be allowed in this.” — “ This reflection leads him with great advantage [from l. 379 to 391] to *the general conclusion in view*, viz. that as none but excellent poetry will be allowed, it should be a warning to writers, HOW THEY ENGAGE IN IT WITHOUT ABILITIES; OR PUBLISH WITHOUT SEVERE AND FREQUENT CORRECTION.”

If the learned Critick here means that “ *the general instruction of this part*, viz. A DILIGENCE IN WRITING, is chiefly inculcated, for the sake of the *general conclusion in view*, a warning to writers, HOW THEY ENGAGE IN POETRY WITHOUT ABILITIES, OR PUBLISH WITHOUT SEVERE AND FREQUENT CORRECTION;” if, I say, a dissuasive from unadvised attempts, and precipitate publication, is conceived to be the main purpose and design of the Poet, we perfectly agree concerning this last, and important portion of the Epistle: with this addition, however, on my part, that such a dissuasive is not merely *general*, but *immediately* and *personally* directed and applied to the ELDER PRISO; and that too in the strongest terms that words can afford, and with a kind of affectionate earnestness, particularly expressive of the Poet’s desire to awaken and arrest his young friend’s attention.

I have endeavoured, after the example of the learned and ingenious author of the English Commentary, though on somewhat different principles, to  
 3 prove

prove "an unity of design in this Epistle," as well as to illustrate "the pertinent connection of its several parts." Many perhaps, like myself, will hesitate to embrace the system of that acute Critick; and as many, or more, may reject my hypothesis. But I am thoroughly persuaded that no person, who has considered this work of Horace with due attention, and carefully examined the drift and intention of the writer, but will at least be convinced of the folly or blindness, or haste and carelessness of those Criticks, however distinguished, who have pronounced it to be a crude, unconnected, immethodical, and inartificial composition. No modern, I believe, ever more intently studied, or more clearly understood the works of Horace, than BOILEAU. His Art of Poetry is deservedly admired. But I am surpris'd that it has never been observed that the Plan of that work is formed on the model of this Epistle, though some of the parts are more in detail, and others varied, according to the age and country of the writer. The first Canto, like the first Section of *the Epistle to the Pisos*, is taken up in general precepts. The second enlarges on the Lyrick, and Elegiack, and smaller species of Poetry, but cursorily mentioned, or referred to, by Horace; but introduced by him into that part of the Epistle, that runs exactly parallel with the second Canto of Boileau's Art of Poetry. The third Canto treats, entirely on the ground of Horace, of Epick and Dramatick Poetry; though the French writer has, with great address, accommodated to his purpose what Horace has said but collaterally, and as it were incidentally, of the Epick. The last Canto is formed on the final section, the last hundred and eleven lines, of *the Epistle to the Pisos*; the author however, judiciously omitting in a professed Art of Poetry, the description of the Frantick Bard, and concluding his work, like the Epistle to Augustus, with a compliment to the Sovereign.

This imitation I have not pointed out, in order to depreciate the excellent work of Boileau; but to shew that, in the judgement of so great a writer, the method of Horace was not so ill conceived, as Scaliger pretends, even for the outline of an Art of Poetry: Boileau himself, at the very conclusion of his last Canto, seems to avow and glory in the charge of having founded his work on that of HORACE.

Pour moi, qui jusqu'ici nourri dans la Satire,  
N'ose encor manier la Trompette & la Lyre;



Vous me verrez pourtant, dans ce champ glorieux,  
 Vous animez du moins de la voix & des yeux ;  
 Vous offrir en deçont, que ma Muse au Parnasse,  
 Rapparta, jeune encor, DU COMMERCE D'HORACE.

BOILEAU.

After endeavouring to vouch so strong a testimony, in favour of Horace's *unity and order*, from France, it is but candid to acknowledge that two of the most popular Poets, of our own country, were of a contrary opinion. Dryden, in his dedication of his translation of the *Æneid* to Lord Mulgrave, author of the *Essay on Poetry*, writes thus. "In this address to your Lordship, I design not a treatise of Heroick Poetry, but write in a *loose Epistolary way*, somewhat tending to that subject, *after the example of Horace*, in his first Epistle of the 2d Book to Augustus Cæsar, and of that TO THE PISOS; which we call his ART OF POETRY. In both of which he observes NO METHOD that I can trace, whatever Scaliger the Father, or Heinsius may have seen, or rather THINK they had seen. I have taken up, laid down, and resumed as often as I pleased the same subject; and this loose proceeding I shall use through all this Prefatory Dedication. Yet all this while I have been sailing with some side-wind or other toward the point I proposed in the beginning." The latter part of the comparison, if the comparison is meant to hold throughout, as well as the words, "*somewhat tending to that subject*," seem to qualify the rest; as if Dryden only meant to distinguish the *loose EPISTOLARY way* from the formality of a *Treatise*. However this may be, had he seen the *Chart*, framed by the author of the English Commentary, or that now delineated, perhaps he might have allowed, that Horace not only made towards his point with some side-wind or other, but proceeded by an easy navigation and tolerably plain sailing.

Many passages of this Dedication, as well as other pieces of Dryden's prose, have been versified by Pope. His opinion also, on the Epistle to the Pisos, is said to have agreed with that of Dryden; though the Introduction to his Imitation of the Epistle to Augustus forbids us to suppose he entertained the like sentiments of that work with his great predecessor. His general idea of Horace



Horace stands recorded in a most admirable didactick poem; in the course of which he seems to have kept a steady eye on this work of our author.

Horace still charms with graceful negligence,  
And WITHOUT METHOD talks us into sense;  
Will, like a friend, familiarly convey  
The truest notions in the easiest way:  
He, who supreme in judgment, as in wit,  
Might boldly censure, as he boldly writ,  
Yet judg'd with coolness, tho' he sung with fire;  
His precepts teach but what his works inspire.  
Our Criticks take a contrary extreme,  
They judge with fury, but they write with flegm:  
NOR SUFFERS HORACE MORE IN WRONG TRANSLATIONS  
By Wits, THAN CRITICKS IN AS WRONG QUOTATIONS.

*Essay on Criticism.*

I have now compleated my observations on this popular Work of Horace; of which I at first attempted the version and illustration, as a matter of amusement; but which, I confess, I have felt, in the progress, to be an arduous undertaking, and a laborious task. Such parts of the Epistle, as corresponded with the general ideas of Modern Poetry, and the Modern Drama, I flattered myself with the hopes of rendering tolerable to the English Reader; but when I arrived at those passages, wholly relative to the Antient Stage, I began to feel my friends dropping off, and leaving me a very thin audience. My part too grew less agreeable, as it grew more difficult. I was almost confounded in the serio-comick scenes of the Satyrick Piece: In the musical department I was ready, with Le Fevre, to execrate the Flute, and all the Commentators on it; and when I found myself reduced to scan the merits and demerits,

demerits of Spondees and Trimeters, I almost fancied myself under the dominion of some *plagosus Orbilius*, and translating the *proædia* of the Latin Grammar. Borrowers and Imitators cull the sweets, and suck the classick flowers, rejecting at pleasure all that appears sour, bitter, or unpalatable. Each of them travels at his ease in the high turnpike-road of poetry, quoting the authority of Horace himself to keep clear of difficulties;

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*Desperat tractata nitefcere posse, relinquit.*

A translator must stick close to his Author, follow him up hill and down dale, over hedge and ditch, tearing his way after his leader thro' the thorns and brambles of literature, sometimes lost, and often benighted.

*A master I have, and I am his man,  
Gallop'g dreary dun!*

The reader, I fear, will fancy I rejoice too much at having broke loose from my bondage, and that I grow wanton with the idea of having regained my liberty. I shall therefore engage an advocate to recommend me to his candour and indulgence; and as I introduced these notes with some lines from a noble Poet of our own country, I shall conclude them with an extract from a French Critick: Or, if I may speak the language of my *trade*, as I opened these annotations with a *Prologue* from ROSCOMMON, I shall drop the curtain with an *Epilogue* from DACIER. Another curtain now demands my attention. I am called from the contemplation of Antient Genius, to sacrifice, with due respect, to Modern Taste: I am summoned from a review of the magnificent spectacles of Greece and Rome, to the rehearsal of a Farce at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket.

“Voilà tout ce que j’ai cru nécessaire pour l’intelligence de la Poétique d’Horace ! si Jules Scaliger l’avoit bien entendue, il lui auroit rendu plus de justice, & en auroit parlé plus modestement. Mais il ne s’estoit pas donné la temps de le bien comprendre. Ce Livre étoit trop petit pour estre goûté d’un homme comme lui, qui faisoit grand cas des gros volumes, & qui d’ailleurs aimoit bien mieux donner des regles que d’en recevoir. Sa Poétique est assurément un ouvrage d’une erudition infinie ; on y trouve par tout des choses fort recherchées, & elle est toute pleine de faillies qui marquent beaucoup d’esprit :  
mais



“ mais j’oserai dire qu’il n’y a point de justesse dans la plupart de ses jugemens, & que sa  
 “ critique n’est pas heureuse. Il devoit un peu plus etudier ces grands maitres, pour se cor-  
 “ riger de ce defaut, qui rendra toujours le plus grand savoir inutile, ou au moins rude &  
 “ sec. Comme un homme delicat etanchera mille fois mieux sa soif, & boira avec plus de  
 “ goût & de plaisir dans un ruisseau dont les eaux seront claires & pures, que dans un fleuve  
 “ plein de bourbe & de limon : tout de même, un esprit fin qui ne cherche que la justesse  
 “ & une certaine fleur de critique, trouvera bien mieux son compte dans ce petite traité  
 “ d’Horace, qu’il ne le trouverait dans vingt volumes aussi enormes que la Poetique de  
 “ Scaliger. On peut dire veritablement que celui qui boit dans cette source pure, *pleno se*  
 “ *proluit auro* ; & tant pis pour celui qui ne fait pas le connoître. Pour moi j’en ai un  
 “ tres grand cas. Je ne say si j’auray esté assez heureux pour la bien éclaircir, & pour en  
 “ dissiper si bien toutes les difficultés, qu’il n’y en reste aucune. Les plus grandes de ces  
 “ difficultés, viennent des passages qu’Horace a imité des Grecs, ou des allusions qu’il y a  
 “ faites. Je puis dire au moins que je n’en ay laissé passer aucune sans l’attaquer ; & je  
 “ pourrois me vanter,

— *nec tela nec ultas*

*Vitavisse vices Danaum.*

“ En general je puis dire que malgré la foule des Commentateurs & des Traducteurs,  
 “ Horace estoit tres-malentendu, & que ses plus beaux endroits estoient défigurés par les  
 “ mauvais sens qu’on leur avoit donnés jusques icy, & il ne faut pas s’en étonner. La  
 “ plupart des gens ne reconnoissent pas tant l’autorité de la raison que celle du grand  
 “ nombre, pour laquelle ils ont un profond respect. Pour moy qui say qu’en matiere de  
 “ critique on ne doit pas compter les voix, mais les peser ; j’avoüe que j’ay secoué ce  
 “ joug, & que sans m’assujétir au sentiment de personne, j’ay tâché de suivre Horace, & de  
 “ démêler ce qu’il a dit d’avec ce qu’on luy a fait dire. J’ay mesme toujours remarqué (&  
 “ j’en pourrois donner des exemples bien sensibles) que quand des esprits accoutumés aux  
 “ cordes, comme dit Montagne, & qui n’osent tenter de franches allures, entreprennent de  
 “ traduire & de commenter ces excellens Ouvrages, où il y a plus de finesse & plus de mystere  
 “ qu’il n’en paroist, tout leur travail ne fait que les gêter, & que la seule vertu qu’ayent  
 “ leurs copies, c’est de nous dégoûter presque des originaux. Comme j’ay pris la liberté  
 “ de juger du travail de ceux qui m’ont précédé, & que je n’ay pas fait difficulté de les  
 “ condamner tres-souvent, je declare que je ne trouveray nullement mauvais qu’on juge du  
 “ mien, & qu’on releve mes fautes : il est difficile qu’il n’y en ait, & mesme beaucoup ;  
 “ si quelqu’un veut donc se donner la peine de me reprendre, & de me faire voir que  
 “ j’ay mal pris le sens, je me corrigeray avec plaisir : car JE NE CHERCHE QUE LA  
 “ VERITE, QUI N’A JAMAIS BLESSE PERSONNE : AU LIEU QU’ON SE TROUVE TOU-  
 “ JOURS MAL DE PERSISTER DANS SON IGNORANCE ET DANS SON ERREUR.

DACIER.

T H E E N D.



